Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party February 1976 30 pence

Castro reports at the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba. Part of the Platform

Editorial Comments

Geoff Roberts — The Politics of the International Marxist Group

Sebastian Herkommer — The Concept of Stratum in the Class Analysis of Advanced Capitalist Societies

Terry Bushell — Thoughts on Leisure and Sport Part II - Sport

Discussion:

Hugh Faulkner — A Marxist View of Primary Medical Care

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Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

Volume 20, Number 2

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Orders and Subscriptions
Usual Agents or Central Books Ltd., 37 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8PS

Subscription Rates
£4.15 per annum UK and Eire
£4.27 per annum Abroad

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Editorial Comments

IT is good that the 45 million Vietnamese people, who fought so long and so courageously for the independence of their country, should be faced with a truly happy New Year of economic advance. "For us Vietnamese", said Pham Van Dong, Premier of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, last September, on the 30th anniversary of its foundation, "a glorious chapter of history has been turned and a new period has begun: the period of peaceful construction".

In South Viet Nam economic rehabilitation is in full swing. The return to operation of factories and enterprises of all sizes is being encouraged. While the call has been made to the working class and working people of town and country to take the lead, every effort is being exerted to win the support of the national capitalists. At the same time steps are being taken to prevent the old comprador capitalists from hoarding, illegal trading, attempting to monopolise the market, or harming economic reconstruction in any way.

Socialist North Viet Nam, said Pham Van Dong, will "display its courage and intelligence in expanding rapidly existing heavy industries, which are very necessary to itself and to the entire country". Greater importance will be attached to the production of consumer goods:—

> "At present, at a time when the entire country has regained independence and freedom and is advancing to socialism, socialist North Viet Nam has all the greater obligation to give fuller play to its achievements and experience and make the most effective contribution to the rehabilitation and development of the economy in the South".

Thus, while North and South, with close co-operation between the governments of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Viet Nam, are each taking the specific necessary economic and political measures, the process accelerates for the reunification of the country as a whole.

When the people of Viet Nam were fighting for independence they were fighting also for all of us. We owe them very much. We should endeavour to aid them in any way we can in their work of peaceful construction and wish them every success in this New Year.

FIRST CONGRESS OF THE CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY

The first Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, formed in 1965 by the fusion of the three revolutionary forces, the July 26 Movement, the People's Socialist Party (frequently referred to as the 'old Communists') and the Directorio Revolucionario 13 de Marzo, an historic event in the life of the country, met at Havana from December 17-22 of last year.

Fidel Castro's report to the Congress was a detailed account of the historical roots and development of the Cuban revolution, its struggle for survival, its achievements and the next stage of the construction of socialism. Emerging clearly was the way in which the Cuban Communists mastered the experiences of the long and bitter struggles against colonialism, slavery and imperialism and the works of Jose Marti and other outstanding revolutionary thinkers to find the road to socialism in their country.

To carry through a revolution and begin to construct socialism in an under-developed country on the doorstep of the mightiest imperialist power in the world is no light task. That Cuba has survived and has so many achievements to its credit is due to the independence and unquenchable revolutionary spirit of its peoples and the solidarity they have received from the international working class and national liberation movements.

Fidel's report (to which we will return in a future number of *Marxism Today*) recorded such advances as the elimination of vice, corruption, illiteracy, unemployment, disease, production increases, improvements in housing and an all round improvement in material conditions. It was the opposite of a complacent report. There were criticism of past weaknesses and failure to learn from the experience of other countries in the construction of socialism. While advancing a bold plan for rapid economic growth it pointed to the many problems which would have to be overcome and the difficulties

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created by Cuba's lack of indigenous energy resources.

Similarly on foreign policy Fidel unhesitatingly criticised some past positions saying "To defend peace is to defend socialism. At the beginning we ourselves, irritated and indignant with constant imperialist aggression, did not see these questions with the same clarity as we do now."

The 86 fraternal parties and liberation movements who had responded to the invitation to attend the Conference expressed not only the growing ties between the national liberation movement and the Communist and workers parties but the fact that Cuba's revolution has a significance reaching far beyond its own shores.

A CUBAN JOURNEY

Lee Chadwick's *Cuban Journey*[1] provides a traveller's and, in her own words, "a partisan view", for she writes with deep sympathy about the history and achievements of the Cuban revolution.

Her book presents a brief, but well written history of the struggle of the Cuban people virtually from Columbus to Castro and then, in a personal way, she tells of her visits to the island in the autumn of 1971 and again in March—April 1975.

This is not a book for specialists, but an attempt to convey the life, spirit and revolutionary creativity of a people who, after so long a history of suffering and oppression, are now, despite all the difficulties and problems, knowing the joy of being their own masters and building socialist society.

She writes of industry in the cities and life in the countryside, of culture and cooking and cattle breeding, of the change in the people as they work to change society, but, above all, on the youth and the children, on education in every form.

Lee Chadwick has been a teacher (she worked at one time at A. S. Neill's Summerhill School), she is an experienced children's writer. Every traveller, she writes in her foreword, looks most closely at what interests them most—"in my case it was children, and Cuba's young people are good ambassadors for their country".

She writes with a simplicity, sincerity and sympathy which makes her book a good introduction to Cuba which could be read with pleasure by young and old.

[1] Lee Chadwick—"A Cuban Journey", Dennis Dobson, £3.95.

CROSSMAN DIARIES AND THE STATE

In our issue of March 1975 we quoted extracts from the *Crossman Diaries* which were then being printed in the *Sunday Times* showing the very great powers of the top civil servants over Ministers, how they take them over, insulate them from the real world, direct, push, cajole and deceive them into taking the line the officials think they should take.

The full text of the first part of these *Diaries* has now been published in book form.[2] It provides even more illuminating examples of this process, illustrates the basic attitudes of right-wing labour leaders to the State, as well as giving a detailed if cynical "inside account" of how the Labour Government of 1964-1966 sought to solve the problems of British capitalism at the expense of the people.

Like Ramsay MacDonald and Attlee before him, Harold Wilson was ". . . deeply conventional in his acceptance of the civil service hierarchy and is willing to leave all the key people in their key positions. . . ." (p. 246).

These key officials linked by education, outlook and life style to the existing social status quo are able to impose their policy in all kinds of subtle and not so subtle ways. Amongst the cruder methods are the simple publication of their own views as official government or ministerial policy. One of the many examples given is that of a communiqué by the Foreign Office on June 31 1966 announcing the full support of the Labour Government for the resumption of the bombing by the Americans in Vietnam. Crossman writes:—

> "I know as a fact that this communiqué had not been approved by Harold and I have my doubts whether it was even approved by Michael Stewart" (the then Foreign Secretary, p. 443).

Among the more subtle methods are the activities of the Treasury and the system of Committees of officials concerned with "suggesting" lines of policy. The Treasury is the prime source of promotion in the Civil Service and, says Crossman:—

> "All the civil servants I worked with were imbued with a prior loyalty to the Treasury and felt it necessary to spy on me and report all my doings to the Treasury whether I wanted them to or not.

[2] Richard Crossman—*Diaries of a Cabinet Minister, Vol. I 1964-1966*, Hamish Hamilton and Jonathan Cape, £7.95.

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> There was nothing I could do, no order I could give, which wasn't at once known to the Treasury. . . ." (p. 615).

Within a particular Ministry difficulties or disagreements over policy are referred to a committee of the officials concerned. These produce proposals and Crossman writes—"Naturally a solution hammered out by the officials is very difficult to overturn". Then there are the inter-departmental committees of officials called in when a number of ministries are involved in connection with a particular policy. These elaborate "a coherent Whitehall view . . . (which) is nearly always a view dominated by Treasury thinking . . . I have yet to see a Minister prevail against a inter-departmental paper without the backing of the Prime Minister, the First Secretary or the Chancellor . . . without this . . . the chances of winning against the official view is absolutely nil. . . ." (p. 200).

The *Diaries* thus reveal how the system of administration supposedly subordinate to the government of the day, in practice dominates government policy. As Crossman indicates—Governments come and go but Whitehall, especially its key figures, remain and exercise a tremendous influence in dealing with problems in ways which do not threaten the interests of the ruling class.

WHAT THE COMMUNISTS WANT FOR FRANCE

From February 4-8 at St-Ouen the French Communist Party is holding its 22nd Congress. An extremely important statement—*What the Communists Want for France*—has been issued as a preparatory document for the Congress.

The first of its four sections—*The French People and the Crisis*—describes the conditions of life of the French people, the attacks on living standards and on democracy, the nature of the crisis, and the need for radical change in French society.

The second—*A More Secure, More Just, More Beautiful Life*—depicts socialism in France not as some utopian ideal, but as it can arise in struggle in French conditions. It outlines the Communist aim of social progress, a secure life, social justice. Particularly stressed is the *quality* of life under socialism. However urgent the increase of consumption "a better life means more than increased consumption". Fraternity must replace the jungle of capitalist society. Science and technology must serve men and women and not profit. A new era of freedom is envisaged[3] and an independent France active in its peaceful and progressive international relations.

The third section—*A Democratic Transition to Socialism*—discusses how the new society can be achieved within the context of the specific history of France and the present world situation. It presents the central role of the Common Programme of the Left as the basis for achieving in struggle "an advanced democracy, a political and economic democracy far in advance over any that our country has ever known". It explains that the revolutionary process is a democratic one. It considers the international conditions within which socialism will be achieved "in the colours of France".

The fourth and last section—*The Forces of Change*—shows the working class as the guiding force in the popular struggle, the union of the French people built up around the working class, and the role of the Communist Party.

The simplicity of the language of the statement and its combination of passionate feelings and calm persuasion give it great strength.

We hope to publish as documents extensive extracts from the main Congress Reports or Resolutions in later issues of *Marxism Today*.

"THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS—A REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS"

A significant part of the third section of the document argues that the process of changing French society will be both democratic and revolutionary:

> "The process towards the socialist society that we want will be democratic. *Changing the society, building a socialist France can only be the democratic work of the majority of the French people.* It is not possible to build a good society without the people or against the will of the people".
>
> "Communists categorically reject the concept of 'acting minorities' which asserts that exemplary actions taken by small, determined groups can shake the popular masses and lead them into revolution. This is a path of isolation, adventure and defeat. . . .
>
> "The aim of the communists in publicising their idea of the future in France is to win the assent of a large majority of the French people. But they realise that the best way to achieve this is through the people's own experience.
>
> "It is for this reason that the French Communist Party is struggling to replace the present bourgeois rule with a Union of the Left Government which will

[3] See the *Draft of the French Communist Party's "Declaration of Liberties"* in the September 1975 *Marxism Today*.

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implement the Common Programme of the Left. The reforms undertaken will, by undermining capitalist rule, greatly improve the well-being of broad masses of our population at the same time as furthering democracy. The situation will then be favourable for the people in their majority to decide, freely and sovereignly, whether or not to continue the transition to socialism".

The statement warns strongly that:—

"Our history abounds with examples of forgotten promises and attempts to thwart the people's will. The bourgeois exploiters have never willingly given up their domination and privileges, and have always tended to use any possible means to preserve or recover them. The painful experience of Chile and the situation in Portugal bear witness to this fact. Therefore, the workers and popular masses have to do more than merely exercise their right to vote once every five or seven years".

REVOLUTION NOT REFORMISM

The statement continues:—

"The action of the working class and the broad masses of the population is indispensable. The communists tell the workers frankly: *There is no way but struggle to obtain satisfaction to immediate demands, to impose the essential transformations leading the way to socialism.* The democratic transition to socialism which we are submitting to the French people is a succession of bitter struggles, mass struggles, to continue changing the balance of social and political forces increasingly in favour of the workers and popular social strata. At each stage, these struggles will prepare the democratic expression of popular will through universal suffrage and will guarantee its respect".

The statement discusses the difference of principle between a reformist and a revolutionary road to socialism:—

"The communists, by summoning the workers to take part in the struggle for the satisfaction of their interests and aspirations, differentiate themselves from social-democratic reformists, who recoil from the necessity of mobilising the people against bourgeois capital and leading a resolute struggle against the forces representing it. . . .

"The communists are true revolutionaries because they want not simply to adjust but to transform society, to replace capitalism by socialism, and because they realise that such a transformation depends on a bitter and complex class struggle".

"However, revolution is not synonymous with violence. Civil war is not one of the goals which the French Communist Party, is proposing to the working class and people of France through their action to ensure democratic progress towards socialism in civil peace and freedom. In the present period in France the revolutionary process is a democratic process".

DAVID CRAIG'S ANTHOLOGY

David Craig's Penguin anthology of Marxist writings on literature[4] admirably fulfils its purpose of providing a series of readings on which further discussion and research can be based. There is, says Craig, no unified view: "Marxist interpretations of literature are rich and various, but they are scattered through all manner of sources." With a few exceptions like Caudwell's *Illusion and Reality* and Fischer's *The Necessity of Art*, he says Marxist critics have not produced systematic works setting out their thought as a whole, as has been done in economics, history and philosophy. Nevertheless it is his case that both in literature and in literary criticism there is a body of Marxist work yielding valuable insights, which has been largely ignored.

Craig himself (as the editor of *Fireweed* a practising poet) is particularly concerned with the question: *how* must one write so as to describe the forces and locate the human qualities which make for a new social order? While sharply criticising "the distortions of literary work and critical thought which occurred in the Stalin era and are still occurring nearly twenty years after the 20th Congress of the Soviet CP", he nevertheless finds "socialist realism" a fruitful idea and a necessary one, which ought not to be dismissed because of these distortions. This interest obviously guides his selection to some extent: thus he is more interested in writers who base themselves directly on the language and culture of workers and peasants, in Lu Hsun and Brecht, than in Goldmann discussing Racine. Nevertheless Marxists with whom he partly disagrees are well represented.

The selection includes brief but seminal notes on literary questions from Marx (on a draft historical play by Lassalle), Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Plekhanov. Most of these are not the classical general statements about ideology and its relation to society and history, but rather discussions and comments on particular literary works (often on attempts to write revolutionary literature).

Generally the collection is easy to read: each piece is intended to be interesting in its own right and intelligible to a reader without previous knowledge of Marxism. Thus Lukacs is represented by one chapter on Tolstoy and realism and another on Kafka and Thomas Mann, rather than by the philosophical arguments which have hitherto been the most reprinted of his writings; and on modern 'avant-garde' literature we have the different viewpoints of Lukacs, Fischer and Max Adereth to show that Marxism is not a dogma but a method of investigation and

[4] *Marxists on Literature: an Anthology*, edited by David Craig, Penguin, £1.50, 528 pp.

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discussion of actual literary works and problems.

There are a number of pieces by Marxists working in Britain, which show that much more of value has been done here than is usually recognised. They include George Thomson on the origins of poetry; Caudwell on English poetry in the period of capitalist accumulation; Victor Kiernan on Wordsworth; Arnold Kettle on Dickens; Jack Mitchell on the nineteenth century proletarian-revolutionary novel; M. Matthews on Othello; Max Adereth on 'committed literature' (*litérature engagée*) in France. The stress is on the *application* of general Marxist ideas to particular cases.

No selection of this kind will satisfy everybody. Craig himself comments that some readers will query his omission of Lucien Goldmann and Walter Benjamin, recently among the most discussed of Marxist critics (though extracts from their writings are already available in Penguin's *Sociology of Literature and Art*). Others will be more concerned that there is nothing here from A. L. Morton, Christopher Hill, Alick West, Jeremy Hawthorne or Jack Lindsay. It is obviously impossible to include every critic of value, but it's a pity there is no guide to further reading which might have listed these, along with more recent Marxist work in other capitalist and socialist countries.

Nevertheless, the book as it stands would make a good basis for local groups, academic or merely interested in reading, wishing to organise discussions on Marxism and literature; and this could well help to bring forward more writers, creative as well as critical, within the Communist and Labour movement.

MARXISM TODAY DISCUSSIONS

We ask readers who intend to participate in the discussion on John Gollan's article—*Socialist Democracy—Some Problems*—not to delay too long so that we can, if possible, start the discussion in our March issue.

With the publication of Professor Sebastian Herkommer's *The Concept of Stratum in the Class Analysis of Advanced Capitalist Societies* we are renewing and continuing an earlier discussion[5]. It will be continued with Gavin Mackenzie's "Class and Class Consciousness—Marx Re-Examined" in our March issue and Alan Hunt will be writing in a later number on kindred subjects.

We have received from Hugh Faulkner and Mannie Cohen the first two contributions on Julian Tudor Hart's "Towards a Marxist Approach to Primary Medical Care in Britain".

[5] See Communist Party pamphlet *Class Structure: Selected Articles from Marxism Today*, 1975, 25p.

Concluded from page 72

'ancillaries' to the doctors. We need to have serious inter-union and inter-professional discussions involving all the workers at the primary health care level.

This will inevitably tread on the corns of some GPs who still cling jealously to their independent contractor status and deeply resent anyone suggesting that they should move to an under-doctored area or even change their pattern of work.

We can expect that in the coming weeks and months those GPs who see themselves primarily as small businessmen will feel themselves increasingly threatened by the decision to eliminate private practice from the NHS. All kinds of proposals will be put to the Royal Commission for alternative methods of financing the health service—all basically some form of more or less concealed return to private practice and rationing by the purse.

As GPs we work in a predominantly middle-class profession, taught mainly hospital medicine by our teachers, confronted by a rapidly changing scene over the past 20 years. Many of our problems are common to all professions today. Some have learned more rapidly that their future and security lie with their fellow trade-unionists in the NHS—and that the 'freedom' of the small-time entrepreneur is increasingly an illusion.

Health Service Cuts

In the immediate future we face the need to resist attacks on the gains already made. Health authorities already have instructions to make drastic economies in their regions, areas and districts which must have profound effects on the services available. We have to mobilise the trade unions and the people as a whole to see that 'the redistribution of resources' is not being used simply to cut back on all services. In this fight we will find useful allies amongst the best of the health service administrators—many of whom are themselves trade-unionists.

Subscription Rate For Abroad

We regret that, in view of the increase in foreign postage rates, it is necessary to increase the annual subscription rate for addresses abroad to £4.27. The rate for UK and Eire remains at £4.15.

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The Politics of the International Marxist Group—Aspects of a Critique

Geoff Roberts

> "Marxists have always understood that while it is essential to expose and defeat the ideas and policies of the right-wing Labour leaders, who strive to persuade the working class to accept the capitalist system, it is no less important to combat and defeat ideas and policies which, apparently from the other flank, as it were, prove equally harmful to the revolution, even when put forward and supported by people with a sincere desire to assist the struggle against capitalism and imperialism."[1]

Introduction

It is a paradox that although the 1970s have seen the further growth and development of ultra-leftism both in terms of numbers and the influence of its ideas, the necessary task of developing a critique of their policies and activities has hardly begun.[2] The present article was written as a contribution to such a critique. Its object is to subject certain aspects of the politics of the International Marxist Group (IMG) to criticism from a Communist perspective. The character of that criticism has been moulded by a commitment to the broad contours of the policy outlined in the *British Road to Socialism* and other documents of the CPGB.

It is also based on a particular understanding of the lessons to be learnt from the past history of the international labour movement. One which, in contrast to that of the IMG, concludes with a basically (though not exclusively) positive assessment of the role of the world Communist movement in that history. Hence, my "problematic" differs fundamentally from that of the IMG. I mention this because so many of the current disagreements between the Communist Party and the IMG are rooted in differing assessments of the experiences of the past. It is not my intention to enter into a discussion of that character.[3] The article is restricted to an examination of certain aspects of the *current* "strategy for revolution" which the IMG adheres to and I have only entered into a discussion of past history in so far as it is necessary to an understanding of the character of that strategy. The focus of this critique is the "revolutionary perspectives" of the IMG. In other words, IMG's assessment of the relation of class forces and the prospects for socialist progress.

The question of strategy is at the centre of all political debate on the left today and the ultimate criterion for judging any revolutionary organisation must be the efficacy of its strategy. A test of that character, I hope to show, at least in part, will result in an unequivocal rejection of the politics of the IMG. But, first, what is the IMG?

The IMG is the British Section of the Fourth International and has had a public existence of no more than seven years. Its immediate origins extend back to a Trotskyist entrist group in the Labour Party which in the 1960s published the journal *The Week*.[4] The particular Fourth International (FI) to which the IMG is affiliated is based in Paris and is headed by the Belgium Marxist economist Ernest Mandel. It claims the adherence of the majority of the world's Trotskyist

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[1] Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution*, p. 15, Lawrence and Wishart, 1972. An important book which should be read by anyone interested in contemporary ultra-leftism.

[2] This does not mean that nothing has been produced. See, for example:

(a) B. Reid, *Ultra-Leftism in Britain*, Communist Party pamphlet, 1969.
(b) J. Bloomfield, "Myth of Rank and Filism," *Comment*, 30.11.74.
(c) D. Cook and D. Jacks, "A Note on IS and the Student Movement," *Marxism Today*, September 1973.
(d) M. Johnstone, *Trotsky*, *Cogito*, YCL Theoretical Journal, 1969.
(e) B. Reid, "Ultra-Left Groups," *Comment*, 27.7.73.
(f) Woddis book quoted above.

[3] For a critique of an important aspect of the Trotskyist version of world history, see M. Johnstone, "Trotsky and the Popular Front," *Marxism Today*, October/November 1975.

[4] On the origins of IMG, consult T. Ali, *The Coming British Revolution*, pp. 137-42, Jonathan Cape, 1972. For the origin of the Fourth International, see I. Deutscher, *The Prophet Outcast*, OUP, 1963.

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forces.[5] In the case of the IMG these are not very significant[6], despite its claim to have active members in every major trade union. However, it can claim some degree of influence in the student movement and in campaigns such as Abortion and the Troops Out movement.

Although no figures are publicly available, it is probable that a large proportion of its membership are students or come from similar middle strata groups. Its newspaper is *Red Weekly*, with a claimed circulation of 10,000, and a theoretical journal, *International*, is published with some degree of regularity. In addition the group publishes numerous pamphlets on a wide variety of topics. Among its members it can count prominent personalities of the late 1960s such as Tariq Ali and Robin Blackburn. In the February 1974 General Election IMG stood three candidates, each of whom got a handful of votes. The major claim of the IMG is that it is ". . . the only organisation on the left with a clear understanding of the situation in which the working class now finds itself and with clear proposals as to how the movement can go forward . . .".[7] It is to an examination of this claim that we now turn.

Revolutionary Perspectives

> "The art of politics (and the Communist's correct understanding of his tasks) lies in correctly gauging the conditions and the moment when the vanguard of the proletariat can successfully seize power . . ." (Lenin).[8]

The point of departure for Marxists in the formulation of "revolutionary perspectives" is an analysis of what Lenin called the "present moment",[9] i.e. the current stage of the development of one's strategic perspective of class alliances (which in turn is based on a class analysis of the social formation as a whole),[10] and the concrete steps required for its further development. At the most general level of analysis the IMG's understanding of the present conjuncture ("present moment") is summed up in a document published in its theoretical journal in 1973:

> "The socialist revolution is once again on the agenda in Europe, not just in broad historical perspective . . . but even from a *conjunctural* point of view."[11] (My emphasis.)

In the case of Britain we are told that:

> ". . . a head-on collision between capital and labour seems unavoidable in the period before us."[12]

Drawing the conclusions from such a prognosis the document continues:

> *"In the present circumstances, the 'central strategic project' can only be: support, extend, unify, and generalise all current struggles towards the preparation of a general strike to bring down the Tory government and create a situation of dual power in Britain."*[13]

With some modifications impelled by a changing political situation resultant upon the election of a Labour government,[14] the above statements sum up the essence of IMG's current perspectives. In brief, although the IMG does not expect a revolutionary upheaval tomorrow, it is fair to say that its present policies are based on the expectation of such an event in the near future.[15]

What evidence does the IMG offer to support such a sweeping assumption? In the main, it is of two varieties: firstly, the extremity of the world economic crisis and its accentuation in the case of Britain, and, second, on the subjective side, a "growing radicalisation of the class".[16]

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[5] There is no reason to doubt this claim although "adherence" is perhaps too strong a word for an organisation that is split from top to bottom. See *World Congress of the Fourth International (Documents)*, Intercontinental Press, 23.12.74.

[6] No figures are available but, at a guess, in the region of 500 members.

[7] *Red Weekly (RW), Special Supplement*, p. 4, 7.12.73.

[8] Lenin, *Selected Works (SW)*, Vol. 10, pp. 91-92, Lawrence and Wishart, 1938.

[9] Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 50, Lawrence and Wishart, 1936.

[10] See Michael Gane, *Leninism and the Concept of Conjuncture, Theoretical Practice*, No. 5, Spring 1972.

[11] *International*, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 40.

[12] *International*, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 9.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[14] In particular the focus of the struggle has been switched from the Tories to the Wilson Government. IMG is now much more orientated to the struggle between left and right in the Labour Party. Currently, it is calling for a "United Front" between the "Revolutionary Left" and the *Tribune* group. We should be clear that this does not represent a principled policy of *strategic* unity of the left, but is a *tactic* designed to destroy the labour left as a political force. "It is only by ruthlessly pursuing a policy of unity in action that we can hope to break these workers from their bureaucratic misleaders [i.e. left social democracy—G. R.]." (*Red Weekly*, 27.2.75.)

[15] The perspectives are reiterated in *ibid.* E. J. Hobsbawm has described such perspectives as a "gamble on a sudden crisis which will somehow precipitate a new political and ideological alignment". In *Revolutionary Perspectives*, p. 2, Birbeck Socialist Society pamphlet, 1973.

[16] *International*, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 9.

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That there is a growing economic crisis is commonly accepted on the left, as is the argument that such a situation is a time of great opportunities (and dangers) for the left. There is, however, a limit to such opportunities and there can be no question of an automatic correlation between economic crises and revolutionary upsurges. If that were the case then capitalism would have been swept aside long ago, in Britain and the world over! Whether or not the present economic crisis results in upheavals of revolutionary dimensions or, at the least, a significant shift to the left will largely depend on the development of the subjective factor, i.e. the degree of socialist consciousness, and its organisational embodiment, of the working class and its allies.

The Myth of "Radicalisation"

What about the "growing radicalisation of the class" that IMG speaks of? It seems to me that the "radicalisation",[17] which IMG refers to, is a myth. IMG correctly points to the significance of the developing sectional class struggles of the past period as well as the more overtly political struggles against successive governmental industrial relations policies, incomes policies, unemployment, etc. However, ascribing to these developments a "radicalisation of the class" is to commit the dual error of not only confusing militancy with socialist consciousness but also failing to distinguish between developments of consciousness in the vanguard of the working class and its allies from that of the class as a whole.

One of the most significant features of the past period has been, despite an intense economic crisis and the most massive class struggles since the 1920s, the absence of any significant developments in the direction of socialist consciousness. If anything the evidence points to a contrary trend. The recent general elections in which Labour polled its lowest percentage of the total vote for many years (with Labour voters either abstaining or voting for right-wing parties)[18] is just one indication that this may well be the case. If this coupled with the fact of the immense difficulties that the left has had in mobilising against the Social Contract (defeat in the miners' ballot, a two to one majority in favour of the £6 limit at the TUC, successes for the right in the AEUW elections, etc.) and other relevant factors such as the Referendum result, then any talk about "radicalisation" is somewhat premature.

This is not to imply an underestimation of the advances that have been made which are important and provide a solid foundation for future progress. Nevertheless, the crucial problem remains one of transforming militant sectional consciousness into socialist consciousness. To transform a "class-in-itself" into a "class-for-itself".[19]

According to Lenin the "living soul of Marxism is the concrete analysis of concrete situations".[20] On the basis of such a criterion the perspectives of IMG have little to offer serious revolutionaries. Nevertheless, it must be granted that the scenario envisaged by the IMG of a head-on confrontation between capital and labour developing into a situation of dual power if *unlikely* is still a *possibility*, one that we must be aware of. However, the paramount point, as Lenin put it, is that "when analysing any given situation, a Marxist must proceed *not from the possible,* but from the actual."[21]

Implications of Incorrect Perspectives

Taking the argument a stage further the implications of such incorrect perspectives will be examined. Clearly, if the basic perspective is out of tune with reality, then the concomitant imperatives that stem from such a perspective will also be erroneous. One's analysis of the stage reached in the struggle broadly determines the nature of the objectives that are sought in the coming period, and, especially, the content of the demands for which revolutionaries agitate in the broad working-class movement in order to lead that movement forward.

In the IMG's view we are on the threshold of *the* decisive struggle and the objective set is no less than a situation of dual power—the immediate prelude to the seizure of power. Any conception of an intermediate phase or phases is alien to such a view. Once such terms of reference are accepted it is completely consistent to argue that the Communist Party's policy of campaigning for a "Labour government committed to left policies" is "completely reactionary".[22]

On the other hand, if those very perspectives are denied any substance because of their lack of any relation to reality, then what actually is objectively "reactionary", in the sense that it helps sow

[17] By "radicalisation" I understand to mean a development in the direction of socialist consciousness.

[18] There is, of course, the argument, popular in ultra-leftist circles, that the low labour vote and the large number of abstentions reflect a breakdown of "illusions" in "bourgeois democracy". A less likely explanation would be harder to find.

[19] The distinction is Marx's. For a useful discussion of the whole question of class consciousness consult H. Wolpe's article in the *Socialist Register*, 1970.

[20] Quoted in Michael Gane, *op. cit.*

[21] Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 35, Lawrence and Wishart, 1936.

[22] *RW, Special Supplement*, 7.12.73.

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confusion and disunity in the movement, is the posing of demands which are far beyond the current capacity of that movement to achieve. Such is the character of the demands put forward by the IMG which they call "transitional demands". The character of such demands is explained in the "Transitional Programme of the Fourth International":

> "It is necessary to help the masses in the process of daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist programme of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."[23]

The feature which differentiates transitional demands most sharply from other types of demands is that they go beyond the capacity of the system to concede, or, as E. Mandel puts it, "those demands which cannot be incorporated or assimilated into the normal functioning of bourgeois society".[24] In other words, their nature is such that to concede them would require a basic change in the nature of the system. As is made crystal clear in another passage of the *Transitional Programme,* the question of realisability is of no account:

> "If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. 'Realisability' or 'unrealisability' is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces which can only be decided by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical success may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery."[25]

Now there can be no objection to transitional demands in principle. However, the utilisation of such demands only makes sense in particular types of situation, i.e. those in which such demands are realisable, a situation of (possible) imminent revolutionary transformation. In other words, transitional demands are only appropriate to transitional situations. To pose such demands in any other situation is, apart from the fact that the masses are unlikely to take them up, to invite disaster. At the very least it carries the strong possibility that certain sections of the movement will be diverted down a blind alley. At the very worst it could lead to the complete isolation of the vanguard from the mass of the people. Aware of such dangers Lenin made the point in *Left-Wing Communism* that:

> ". . . the whole task of the Communists is to be able to convince the backward elements, to be able to work among them, and not to fence themselves off from them by artificial and childishly 'left' slogans."[26]

The IMG's Theoretical Tradition

Having established the erroneous nature of IMG perspectives and of the policies consequent upon them, a further question arises. What is it that leads an organisation like the IMG, whose membership largely consists of dedicated socialists, many of whom are in some respects able Marxists, to adopt perspectives and policies which are fundamentally unsound? I want to argue that the explanation is to be sought primarily in the sphere of *theory,* by which I mean that the IMG's analysis is rooted in a particular theoretical tradition, the origins of which can be traced, in the first instance, to the early debates in the Bolshevik Party and passes through the controversies of the 1920s and 1930s over socialism in one country, permanent revolution, popular frontism, and related issues.

This is not to dismiss Lenin's analysis in *Left-Wing Communism* of the childish petty-bourgeois mentality which led the "lefts" of his period to mistake ". . . *their desire,* their ideological-political attitude, for objective reality", which is . . . the most dangerous mistake revolutionaries can make.[27] To digress for a moment, in the case of the IMG a perfect example of petty-bourgeois childishness is to be found in its response to the manoeuvring of the Tories to stay in office after the February 1974 General Election. In a special supplement to *Red Weekly* the following slogans were promulgated:

Finish Off the Tories
Mass Strikes and Occupations in all
Factories and Colleges
Mass Demonstrations in every Area
Mass Demonstrations every day at Downing Street
TUC should call a General Strike
to finish off the Tories
Labour leaders should proclaim a Labour Government
General Strike[28]

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[23] *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International,* pp. 14-15, Socialist Labour League, 1970.

[24] E. Mandel, *What is Trotskyism?,* p. 10, Plough Book Service, 1975.

[25] *Op. cit.,* p. 17.

[26] Lenin, *Selected Works,* Vol. 10, p. 95, Lawrence and Wishart, 1938.

[27] *Ibid.,* p. 99.

[28] *RW, Special Supplement,* 3.3.74.

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This was published on the day that Wilson was called to the Palace by the Queen to form a government! Bearing in mind earlier comments about the General Election result, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that although the slogans are admirable in their sentiment they are less so in terms of their practicality.[29] They are a perfect (albeit extreme) example of the IMG's inability to distinguish what is *possible* from what is *desirable*. Instead of posing the need for the development of the movement which had forced the Tories to call the election, and putting forward realistic proposals which would have aided such development the IMG, as so often, produced a series of "revolutionary phrases":

> "The slogans are superb, alluring, intoxicating, but there are no grounds for them: such is the nature of the revolutionary phrase."[30]

However, mere reptition of Lenin circa 1920 is not sufficient. My argument is that with the IMG we have a case of an intertwined conjunction of the petty-bourgeois mentality with a particular theoretical tradition. Undoubtedly, it is difficult (at times impossible) to disentangle the numerous elements involved. Nevertheless an examination of *certain aspects* of that theoretical tradition will enable us to attain a much greater comprehension of the nature of the revolutionary perspectives that the IMG adheres to.

Trotskyism and the Transitional Programme

The theoretical tradition to which the IMG belongs is, of course, that of Trotsky—they would argue of Marx, Engels, and Lenin as well. The key programmatic document produced by that tradition is the *Transitional Programme* (TP) written by Trotsky and adopted at the founding conference of the Fourth International (FI) in September 1938.[31] The TP provides the point of departure for all Trotskyist groups and sects in Britain and the world over. True, the IMG's adherence to the TP is characterised by specific emphases and interpretations. Nevertheless, the broad programmatic conceptions and perspectives of the TP forms the framework for its policy and hence its current strategy.[32] Thus, an answer to the question of what is the nature of the theoretical tradition of the IMG of necessity entails coming to terms with the relevant component parts of the TP and its underlying conceptions.

The Concept of the Epoch

The central idea that emerges from the Transitional Programme, the one that provides its starting point, is a particular notion of the character of the epoch in which we live. The epoch is defined as one of war, revolution, and social upheaval. Hence, the period, in terms of the tasks of revolutionaries, is designated as "pre-revolutionary".[33] Hardly a controversial description if it refers to broad historic processes at the international level. Indeed, for Marxists such a statement is a truism for which ample justification can be found even by the most superficial perusal of world history and a minimal grasp of Marxist concepts. The Trotskyist conception, however, consists of much more than that. In works other than the TP Trotsky expounded at greater length on his conception. For example:

> "The revolutionary character of the epoch does not lie in that it permits of the accomplishment of the revolution; that is, the seizure of power at every given moment. Its revolutionary character consists in *profound and sharp fluctuations and abrupt and frequent transitions from an immediately revolutionary situation*; in other words, such as to enable the CP to strive for power."[34] (My emphasis.)

To clarify, Trotsky is not speaking here only of trends and tendencies present at an *international* level but also of each *national* situation of indi-

[29] This point needs to be qualified somewhat. A consistent feature of ultra-left sloganising is the juxtaposition of realistic and unrealistic agitational demands. Hence, in the case of the quoted example the first, third and fourth slogans are acceptable while the others, which bear no relation to what was possible at the time, are not.

[30] Quoted in Woddis, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

[31] The FI was formed as the successor to what Trotsky and his small band of followers considered a defunct Third International. According to the TP the Comintern had passed over "to the side of the bourgeois order" and was playing a "cynically counter-revolutionary role throughout the world" (*op. cit.*, p. 13). At the founding conference a handful of delegates, from even fewer countries, were present; none of whom represented organisations of any importance.

[32] Doubtless the Workers' Revolutionary Party would disagree. In its pamphlet *The Theory and Practice of Revisionism*, written by Michael Banda, they have the following to say about the IMG:

> "Defined briefly, the IMG is a collection of middle-class adventurers and publicity-seeking opportunists and liberals who have combined the worst elements of the Stalinist, anarchist and petty-bourgeois nationalist movements into an eclectic hodge-podge which they try to pass off as Trotskyism." (*Workers' Press*, pamphlet, p. 4, 1971.)

[33] *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

[34] L. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, pp. 81-82, Pathfinder Press, 1970.

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vidual CPs. For Trotsky the epoch is "pre-revolutionary", in the sense of the above emphasised passage, at both the global and the nation-state levels. What is involved here is a conflation of the *general* to the *particular*.[35] A smooth transition from the global to the nation-state level is effected. A broad historic conception is all but transformed into a conjunctural one. For a concrete analysis of concrete situations is substituted a preconceived scheme. A scheme which reads as follows: ". . . objective situations independent of the will and control of any group or party *periodically* create pre-revolutionary *situations* in industrialised advanced countries."[36] (My emphasis.) The TP announces that:

> "In *all countries* the proletariat is racked by deep disquiet. The multi-millioned masses again and again enter the road of revolution."[37] (My emphasis.)

Confirmation that this remains the perspective of the Fourth International is to be found in the recently published documents of the Tenth World Congress of that organisation held in 1974. The main political resolution states:

> *"For the next several years . . . the underlying tendency is towards a continuation of the revolutionary rise; an increase in capitalist crises of all sorts; and an increase in powerful thrusts by the mass movement, moving towards the creation of situations of dual power or passing straight over this threshold."*[38]

IMG's adherence to the concept of the epoch developed by Trotsky constitutes a partial answer to the question that was posed above. Its perspectives and strategy are conditioned, indeed predetermined, by that concept. In this light IMG's failure to make an adequate concrete analysis of the concrete situation is perfectly understandable. Any attempt at such an analysis is severely limited by the preconceived schema described above.

The Point of Departure

The theoretical root of Trotsky's conception (and that of his epigones) can be traced to his conviction that ". . . national peculiarities present an original combination of the basic features of the world process". He further argued that "Marxism takes its point of departure from the *world* economy, not as a sum of its national parts but as a mighty and independent reality which has been created by the international division of labour" and that when analysing a particular country Marxists should take as their starting point "the tendencies of world development as a whole in which the individual country, with all its national peculiarities, is included and to which it is subordinated".[39]

In Trotsky's analysis the nation-state is seen as purely an epi-phenomenon of the world economy. The parts (nation-states) are crudely subordinated to the whole (world economy). For Trotsky what is true in general is also true in the particular. Hence, if the world situation as a whole has the characteristics of a pre-revolutionary epoch it follows that this is also true at the nation-state level. It is this denial that the nation-state as an independent entity related to but relatively autonomous of the world economy as a whole is a legitimate object of analysis that constitutes one of the most fundamental errors of Trotsky and his latter-day followers.[40] In this respect it is instructive to consider Gramsci's opinion on this crucial issue:

> ". . . the international situation should be considered in its national aspect. In reality, the internal relations of any nation are the result of a combination which is 'original' and (in a certain sense) unique: these relations must be understood and conceived in their originality and uniqueness if one wishes to dominate them. To be sure, the line of development is towards internationalism, but the point of departure is 'national'—and it is from this point of departure that one must begin. Yet the perspective is international and cannot be otherwise. Consequently, it is necessary to study accurately the combination of national forces which the international class (the proletariat) will have to lead and develop, in accordance with the international perspective and directives (i.e. those of the Comintern). The leading class is in fact only such if it accurately interprets this combination—of which it is itself a component and precisely as such is able to give the movement a certain direction within certain perspectives. It is on this point, in my opinion, that the fundamental disagreement between Leo Davidovitch (Trotsky) and Vissarionovitch (Stalin) as interpreter of the majority movement (Bolshevism) really hinges. The accusations of nationalism are inept if they

[35] ". . . the endeavour to look for answers to concrete questions in the simple logical development of the general truth . . . is a vulgarisation of Marxism and a downright mockery of dialectical materialism." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 32.)

[36] E. Mandel, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[37] *Op. cit.*, p. 13.

[38] *World Congress of the Fourth International (Documents)*, Intercontinental Press, 23.12.74.

[39] These quotations are taken from an IMG pamphlet by John Robens, *Imperialism, Stalinism and the Permanent Revolution*, pp. 9, 27. Robens develops Trotsky's position at length and opposes it to "Stalinist" perspectives.

[40] The methodology bears a close relationship to "Hegelianised" versions of the Marxist "dialectic".

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> refer to the nucleus of the question. If one studies the majoritarians' (Bolsheviks) struggle from 1902-17, one can see that its originality consisted in purging internationalism of every vague and purely ideological (in a pejorative sense) element, to give it realistic political content."[41]

Gramsci's argument, as against Trotsky's, contained, in my opinion, the basis of a correct Marxist perspective on an issue which is at the core of the cleavage over socialism-in-one-country and other questions that occurred in the world movement in the 1920s and has continued to divide Marxists ever since. The issue was (and is) not one of national versus international perspectives, as Trotsky and his followers would have us believe. It is a question of the proper point of departure for Marxists in analysing contemporary reality. For Trotskyists it is the world economy, for Communists, following Gramsci, it is the nation-state. Given his particular starting point it is not surprising that Trotsky, in the words of N. Krasso:

> ". . . failed to understand the fundamental difference between Russian and W. European social structures. For him, capitalism was one and indivisible, and the agenda of the revolution was one and indivisible, either side of the Vistula. This formal internationalism (reminiscent of that of Luxemburg) in fact abolished the concrete differences between the various European countries."[42]

The Character of Revolutionary Strategy in Western Europe

Krasso's comment also brings into focus another characteristic feature of Trotskyism which stems from the incorrect methodological approach discussed above: namely, a failure to recognise the *specificity* of revolutionary strategy in Western Europe. It was Gramsci's great merit to point out the need for revolutionaries, following the "ebb of the revolutionary tide" after 1921, to adapt themselves to the *peculiar* conditions of Western Europe.

Gramsci argued that these very different conditions necessitated the transformation of revolutionary strategy from that of a "war of manoeuvre" (or frontal attack) into a "war of position", i.e. a strategy of delaying a direct assault on state power until certain "strategic positions" of power had been won by the working class led by its party.[43]

Gramsci's new conception stemmed from his analysis of the nature of power in those societies which suggested that it rested upon the ideological hegemony of a particular class (the bourgeoisie) rather than in the control of a repressive apparatus, which in turn entailed a different relation between the "state" and "civil society" (churches, schools, political parties, cultural institutions, etc.) than had existed in Russia. "In Russia the state was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous: in the West, there was a proper relation between state and civil society, and when the state trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The state was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks. . . ."[44] Prior to taking power the revolutionary class would have to break down the "hegemony" of the bourgeoisie and establish its own. In short, the tasks of the revolutionary party in Western society were both different and more complex than they had been in pre-revolutionary Russia.[45]

Frontal Attack?

The type of analysis exemplified by Gramsci was alien to Trotsky, as it still is to his current disciples. He remained "the political theorist of frontal attack in a period in which it can only lead to defeats".[46] What relevance has this to a critique of IMG? Precisely, in that it enables us to identify a major feature of IMG strategy. Following Trotsky, the IMG advocates a strategy of frontal attack (war of manoeuvre)—a frontal attack in the perspective of the short term as opposed to the longer-term strategy of position.[47]

For example, take the crucial question of the state. IMG's characterisation of the necessary form of the revolutionary process in Britain is best summed up by the title of a pamphlet written by Tariq Ali on the events in Chile published in 1973: "There is only one road to socialism and workers' power."[48] In short, a process is envisaged in which a situation of "dual power" will arise out of workers' struggles with the development of the classic feature of autonomous working-class institutions (soviets) in confrontation with the

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[41] A. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, pp. 240-41, Lawrence and Wishart, 1971.

[42] N. Krasso, *Trotsky's Marxism*, p. 81, *New Left Review*, No. 44.

[43] Gramsci, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-39.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 238.

[45] For a discussion of Gramsci's views see John Merrington, *Theory and Practice in Gramsci's Marxism*, *Socialist Register*, 1968.

[46] Gramsci, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[47] George Bridges discusses the relation of Gramsci's ideas to the "British Road to Socialism" in *Themes No. 1*, discussion bulletin of Lewisham Borough CP.

[48] Note also that the main banner of the IMG contingent on the November 1973 Chile demonstration carried the slogan "Armed Road the Only Road".

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capitalist state. At the appropriate moment the latter will be "smashed" by the former via some or other type of insurrection. Thus, the path followed by Lenin in 1917, argues the IMG, is in its essentials appropriate for Britain in the 1970s. Notions of different or national roads to socialism are completely alien to the IMG.

We may compare this approach with that of the Communist Party in the *British Road to Socialism* and other documents. Here an attempt is made to apply the general tenets of the Marxist theory of the state combined with the lessons of history to the peculiar conditions of contemporary British society. Such an analysis must take into account the *specificity* of British traditions, culture, institutions, social structure, capitalist development, and the impact of changing external circumstances. IMG makes no such effort. And, after all, if you accept that "national peculiarities present an original combination of the basic features of the world process" none is needed. It becomes permissible to omit a distinction between the *content* and the concrete *form* of the Russian revolutionary process. A *universal* strategy is applicable to all countries and all periods. The state had to be smashed in Russia, hence, it will have to be smashed in Britain. Once again for a concrete analysis of the concrete situation is substituted a pre-conceived schema. Any analysis that is undertaken functions merely to prove the validity of that schema.

To conclude this part of the argument the strategy outlined in the TP and the one advocated by the IMG today is based on a prior projection of a pre-revolutionary global situation (which is not disputed) into the national context (which must be rejected).

The Role of the Party

To return to the Transitional Programme. The other theme I wish to examine is that of the role of the party in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of objective conditions (in an historical sense) and the immaturity of the subjective factor (socialist consciousness). The approach to this question taken in the TP can only be understood within the framework of the concept of the epoch discussed above. As we have seen, the essence of that conception can be summed up as the belief that "objective situations independent of the will and control of any group or party periodically create pre-revolutionary situations in industrialised countries". Implicit here is the notion that the subjective factor is the epiphenomenon of the objective factor (with a time lag due to the influence of bureaucrats and Stalinists). Thus, a central feature of the TP's approach to the problem of the role of the party is what Trotsky himself called "social-revolutionary fatalism". This can be illustrated by the following quotation from the Transitional Programme:

> "The orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism, and second, by the treacherous politics of the old workers' organisations. Of these factors, the first of course is the decisive one: the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus. . . . As time goes on, their [i.e. Stalinists and Social-Democrats—G. R.] desperate efforts to hold back the wheel of history will demonstrate more clearly to the masses that the crisis of the proletarian leadership, having become the crisis in mankind's culture, can be resolved only by the Fourth International."[49]

Writing in another context Trotsky makes a related point:

> ". . . we cannot adapt the programme to the backward mentality of the workers; the mood is a secondary factor—the prime factor is the objective situation."[50]

Perhaps the clearest exposition of this fatalistic element is given by Michael Pablo, a former secretary of the Fourth International. In reference to the TP he argues that:

> "It is based . . . on the conviction that the orientation of the masses is in the last analysis determined by the objective conditions that characterise society.
>
> "If consequently the programme is worked out in adaptation, not to the conjunctural mentality of the masses, but to objective conditions, *we can be certain that sooner or later the masses will adopt the leading lines and the slogans of such a programme*. That is the meaning and the strength of revolutionary Marxism."[51] (My emphasis.)

The passage in the above quotation is emphasised because it draws attention to another characterestic feature of the TP as it relates to the role of the party—*voluntarism*. Hence, it is possible to find a statement such as the following in the TP:

> "The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterised by an historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat. . . . The turn is now to the proletariat, i.e. chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is

[49] *TP, op. cit.*, p. 14.

[50] *Writings of L. Trotsky, 1938-39*, p. 50.

[51] M. Pablo, *The Fourth International*, p. 13, as reprinted by the SWP National Education Dept., November 1973.

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> reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership. . . . The chief obstacle in the path of transforming the pre-revolutionary into a revolutionary stage is the opportunist character of the proletarian leadership. . . ."[52]

The voluntarism flows logically from the social-revolutionary fatalism. Periodically, pre-revolutionary situations will occur which will result in an orientation of the masses in favour of revolution. The role of the party is to "intervene at that juncture in a decisive manner in order to make a breakthrough towards the conquest of power. . .".[53] Prior to that the role of the party is to "prepare" the masses for that eventuality. Thus, the problem of developing socialist consciousness in the working class is reduced to leadership in its crudest form. Mandel makes the point that:

> "To think that a working class which has been educated, day after day, month after month, year after year, in nothing but immediate trade union demands and electoral politics, will, in some mysterious way, suddenly become capable of revolutionary consciousness . . . is to believe in magic or miracles."[54]

The point is well taken, but must be coupled with another: how does Mandel expect agitation for transitional demands (which constitutes the second stage of his argument) to play any role in the development of socialist consciousness when they bear little or no relevance to the *actual* level of consciousness prevailing or to the character of the political situation? Are we to expect that in some "mysterious" way they will become relevant on the dawn of the pre-revolutionary crisis? That would truly be a "miracle"! The answer must, of course, be no, and in fact, as was argued earlier, the posing of such demands is likely to *hinder* the development of consciousness beyond the immediate level. The fallacy of Mandel's logic is that it is in no way inevitable that objective conditions will play the role which he and the TP ascribes to them. The relationship between the objective and subjective factors in the determination of class consciousness is far more complex than the picture drawn by Mandel and the TP and, concommitantly, so is the role of the party.

The relevance of this to our analysis of IMG perspectives lies in the fact that it helps to explain the faith of the IMG in the economic crisis and also the expectancy that the crisis will of necessity result and continue to result in the "radicalisation of the class". IMG talks of projecting a "central strategic project" which corresponds both to objective needs and the "instinctive thrust of the masses".[55] True to its tradition the IMG conceptualises the role of the party in a thoroughly mechanistic fashion—system in crisis, party must present socialist solution, masses will be forced to adopt these solutions by the objective logic of the crisis, dual power, revolution.

The Turn to the Labour Party

In this final section the main strands of the argument thus far will be drawn together in summary form. This will be followed by an attempt to locate the current *tactical* turn of the IMG (the latest in a long line) within the overall strategic perspective of that organisation.[56]

As we have seen, IMG's strategic perspective is compounded of two basic elements: *theoretical* "economism" and *political* "voluntarism". For the IMG there exist only two levels (both narrowly defined) of practice: the economic and the political. Other levels or dimensions of practice (of which the most important is the ideological/cultural and its institutional forms) which play a crucial mediating role, *vis-à-vis* the aforementioned levels, only enter into IMG's analytical framework on its periphery. One particular consequence of such defective vision has already been noted; namely, the conflation of the nation-state to the world economy and the absence of any conception of the specific autonomy of the former. What at first sight may seem surprising becomes perfectly comprehensible when consideration is given to IMG's analytical omission of precisely that which is most specific to the national level (the ideological/cultural framework) and from which flows the relative autonomy of that level and its primacy as an analytical point of departure.

How does the present tactical orientation (i.e. the turn to the Labour Party) of the IMG fit into the strategic framework outlined above? In that it represents the latest variant of IMG's proverbial search for the means by which the "Revolutionary Party" may be built and, consequently, the leadership of the working class won. This "leadership" syndrome characteristic of all brands of Trotskyism —flows logically from a position which reduces consciousness to an epi-phenomenon of the economic level and ignores every other level except the political. Given economic crises which will result in an orientation of the masses in favour of revolution, the magic key to the successful carrying

[52] *TP, op. cit.*, p. 11-13.

[53] Mandel, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

[54] Mandel, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

[55] *International*, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 10.

[56] This section owes much to the comments of N. Turatsoo. I would also like to thank M. Johnstone and M. Loizos for their helpful comments on other sections.

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through of the revolutionary process is the resolution of the "crisis of leadership". Hence, the subordination of all other tasks to those which are considered necessary for the building of the organisation (i.e. the "leadership").[57]

The mechanics of the resolution of this peculiarly Trotskyist problematic are open-ended, as is illustrated by the diversity of the stratagems adopted at one time or another by the various Trotskyist groupings (and which forms the basis of much of the factional strife which confounds organisations like the IMG). The particular approach adopted by the IMG can be broadly characterised as one of an impressionistic adaptation to whatever appears to give the best chance for making contact with the "advanced layers" of the working class and its allies.

Hence, IMG's evolution from student vanguardism through, among other phases, an orientation to the trade union struggles against the Tory Government, to its current stance towards the left in the Labour Party. Tactical swing has followed tactical swing. In relation to the current policy we should note that its origins are twofold: firstly, the failure of the previous policy, and in particular the refutation by events of its prognosis as to the likely course of the class struggle under the Labour Government;[58] secondly, recognition of the significance of the developing left trend within the Labour Party and among labour movement activists in general.

Thus, in the period since the October 1974 General Election IMG has increasingly orientated its activity in the direction of "left social-democracy".[59] It is interesting to compare current IMG perspectives with its earlier positions. For example, Tariq Ali in his book *The Coming British Revolution* (published in 1972), describing the Labour Party as a "corpse" has the following to say: "If the LP were back in power it would very soon expose itself completely to the mass of workers for what it is—a thoroughly bourgeois prop of British capitalism (p. 23). . . . The LP at present is not seen by the most advanced workers as a force for social change. . . . The class struggle is not reflected inside the party (p. 60-61). . . . This party is becoming more and more 'bourgeoisified'. . . . Another spell in office would result in the total disillusionment of the mass of workers with the LP. . . . Lenin once advised the British revolutionary movement to support the LP like the rope supports the hanging man . . . it seems that the situation of British capitalism today will be sufficient to perform this task (p. 73). . . ." A sharper contrast to *Red Weekly*'s current insistence on the importance of developments in the LP and its calls for a "united front" with the *Tribune* Group would be hard to find. Lack of space prohibits the development of a detailed critique of this latest turn, so we shall end by raising the question as to what future gyrations we can expect from the IMG in its search for revolutionary leadership?

Conclusion

At the beginning of this article we noted the claim of the IMG that it is ". . . the only organisation on the left with a clear understanding of the situation in which the working class now finds itself and with clear proposals as how the movement can go forward. . .". On the basis of even a *partial* examination of that claim the only conclusion that can be drawn is that it is unwarranted.

Whenever IMG undertakes a critique of the CP (which is quite often!) their writers usually conclude with a denunciation of its "bureaucratic" leadership coupled with an appeal for the "rank and file" membership to shed their illusions and join the IMG. My conclusion, therefore, will be of a similar character, except that I will not presume to judge the sincerity of IMG's leadership. The real tragedy of the IMG is not so much that it is wrong but that within its ranks there are many dedicated revolutionaries who, I must conclude, are being led down a blind alley.

[57] Reference back to the section on "The Role of the Party" should be made.

[58] e.g.: "It will not be possible to sell the British working class—the most highly organised and socially powerful in the capitalist world—the idea of wage restraint in the midst of mass unemployment and a rate of inflation that will double prices every three years. . . . It is unthinkable that the working class, which fought the Tory government to a standstill on this issue . . . could accept such a move from a Labour government" (*International*, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 23-24). (See also *International*, Vol. 2, pp. 7-14.)

[59] "The Labour Party is the most immediately decisive political fact in the consciousness of the most important sections of the working class. . . . For any revolutionary organisation not to take up this crisis in a central way . . . is for that organisation to confess that it is really incapable of dealing with the central problems in the political life of the working class" (*RW*, p. 3, 26.6.75). Incidental spin-offs of the "new" line include the call for the National Union of Students to affiliate to the Labour Party and that local Labour Parties be allowed special rights within the National Abortion Campaign. (See also *RW* of 19.6.75 and 25.9.75.)

Special January Issue

The 40-page January issue of Marxism Today contained an article by John Gollan entitled "Social Democracy — Some Problems". It also contained a reprint of the Resolution of the CC of the CPSU of June 30th, 1956, "On Overcoming the Cult of the Individual and its Consequences".

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The Concept of Stratum in the Class Analysis of Advanced Capitalist Societies[1]

Sebastian Herkommer

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I THE MARXIST THEORY OF CLASS AND ITS CRITICS

It is only twenty years since influential theses were propagated about the social structure of advanced societies which stated that class conflict had abated and that a levelling process had occurred, in terms not only of income and prestige, but also of patterns of behaviour and life styles. Ever since then it has been argued that industrial society is tending towards a 'levelled middle class society' (Schelsky). Yet today nearly everyone is prepared to say that the assumption belongs to an episode.

The criticisms of the levelling thesis do not imply a general restitution of the classic Marxian theory of class and class conflict. On the contrary, most sociologists who hope for academic respectability continue their efforts to reject Marx, or at least to modify his theory and conceptual framework. There is, however, a small but growing group of social scientists in the capitalist countries who defend Marx's theory on the social structure of bourgeois society and insist on its validity and methodological usefulness, even when they admit that the recent phase of capitalism shows considerable empirical differences compared to historically earlier phases.

The terms "class" and "stratum" are key ones within these conceptual struggles—at least as far as the German scene is concerned. The problem, however, is an international one if one looks at the *meaning* given to the term "social class." This was the case for the old discussion starting with Max Weber and the Social Democrats' Revisionism, and still is for the new debates between the variety of "bourgeois" sociologists on the one hand, and the Marxists on the other hand. Of course, it would be an untenable over-simplification to identify those conflict-oriented sociologists who use the concept "class" and who reject—on empirical grounds—a destratification thesis, with an essentially Marxist position, or to assume that those who prefer to work with the terms "stratification" and "stratum" are the only sociologists in opposition to Marx's theory of modern society. Moreover, if a social scientist, either bourgeois or Marxist, uses one of the two notions, class or stratum, he will not in general renounce the use of the other.

The question how the terms *should* be used, and how they should be *defined* in sociology, fills thick volumes and whole libraries. I am conscious of this literature, but I do not want to continue it just for the sake of new definitions. What I am going to try is to raise a problem which emerges from the renewal of Marxist thinking and its combination with sociology as a specified discipline within the social sciences.

Before I can formulate the problem, I have to block out—in an admittedly very rough manner—Marxist criticisms of the sociological conceptualisation of social structural phenomena. The *critics* of Marx's theory of class agree on reproaching it for its one-sidedness, its one-dimensionality, its unduly generalised economistic determinism, and its philosophical—i.e. non-sociological—approach. Furthermore they agree on the statement that some important "predictions" of Marx have been falsified by reality, as for instance the polarisation thesis of class structure in capitalist societies, or the thesis of equalising and levelling of work and life conditions within the "two great, directly antagonistic classes."

Social Phenomena and Social Facts

A *Marxist* reply to this criticism would emphasise the more or less fundamental misunderstanding of

[1] This paper was given to the 1975 conference of the British Sociological Association at Canterbury, Kent. I am very much obliged to my friend V. L. Allen from Leeds University, who has gone through the paper and managed to eliminate most of the teutonic distortions in my original writing.

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Marx's method which most of the theoretically as well as empirically motivated rejections reveal. It would emphasise, that within bourgeois sociology the historically specific mode of production, and the corresponding laws of social and political relations have lost the central analytical position, which they are given in classic political economy as well as in its critique by Marx. Therefore, sociology misses the explanatory function which classic theories of society have had. Instead of *deriving* social relations and structures—as well as the ideas people have of them—from the basic organisation of social life-production, sociology asks for a distinct field of its own: the so called pure social facts which are thought to be explanatory of themselves, or at least should be added to other ones such as ethnic, psychic, economic facts. Actually, in theories of social structure, the result of this is the "more-dimensional" concept of class as, among others, Gerhard Lenski has formulated it.

Starting from Single Individuals

Confining social phenomena to social facts usually implies yet another view which is in direct opposition to the Marxist one: that is, to start from the single acting individual in a given social setting. As for the analysis of social structure, society is conceived as consisting of groups or multitudes of individual beings, who are as such holders or bearers of certain characteristics; these characteristics are taken as criteria for a classification which can be one- or more-dimensional, mostly more-dimensional, and are used to classify people according to the chosen variety of criteria into a more or less deliberate number of layers.

This procedure is based on yet another characteristic feature of most of sociological investigation in social structure, which is opposed to the method developed by Marx. That is to say, the focus of interest is shifted from production to distribution, without conceiving the objective relation between the two. Very often, this coincides with the common practice of merely *describing* those distributive characteristics or relations, instead of *analysing* them by the ways and relations of production. The principle underlying most kinds of classification used in this area of research, is a quantitative one, and the general criterion is, how much of certain rare goods such as money, power, prestige etc. people get—how much of certain "*rewards*" are *distributed* to them.

The features and consequences of merely descriptive sociology have not remained unquestioned within the guild of sociologists itself. As to the social structure of modern society, one of the heaviest attacks came from Dahrendorf. He saw very clearly that in modern sociology the meaning of "class" had lost the analytical quality which he found fruitful in Marx's conceptualisation. Dahrendorf states: "Wherever classes are defined by factors which permit the construction of a hierarchical continuum, they are wrongly defined." And further on: "However one may interpret, extend or improve Marx, classes in his sense are clearly not layers in a hierarchical system of strata differentiated by gradual distinctions. . . . *Class* is always a category for purposes of the analysis of the dynamics of social conflict and its structural roots, and as such it has to be separated strictly from *stratum* as a category for purposes of describing hierarchical systems at a given point of time. . . ."[2]

This is just one of the Marxist's objections to empiricist sociology: class like stratum, both without distinction, are used as categories of description, starting from the surface of society—and remaining there! From this I come to the formulation of my problem.

Formulating the Problem

If, from a Marxist point of view, the analysis of the social structure of advanced capitalist societies has to be conceived as a *class* analysis, what function does the category of *stratum* have, if any? Furthermore, if theories of stratification have been unmasked as ideological forms of reaction to scientific socialism, how can a socialist social scientist use one of its central categories, stratum, or how can he use the sociologically diluted term "social class" without it being strictly separated from the hierarchical implication mentioned above?

This is not a merely academic question as can be seen if you look at the lasting dispute and conceptual vagueness which exists even within Marxism about the class situation of the "stratum of the intelligentsia", about the size and limits of the working class, about the white-collar or non-manual workers constituting a class *or* a stratum of their own etc. It is a *political* question in so far as the strategic problem is concerned, whether the revolutionary politics of the organised working class should be determined by the unification of the various groupings the working class consists of, or rather by alliances between a "kernel," i.e. the manuals in large industrial corporations, and some surrounding "layers" of other wage labourers. However, in so far as there exists something called Marxist sociology, the problem posed is an "*academic*" question as well.

II RELATION OF STRATUM TO CLASS

All social scientists, who are indebted to the Marxist theory of society, and who call their methods and concepts Marxist, will agree that the

[2] Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, London, Stanford 1959, p. 76.

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concept of class must be the core category in the analysis of the social structure of capitalist societies. They will define the concept of stratum as a secondary one, but somehow *related* to that of class. However, this relationship has not yet been adequately classified within Marxist theory.

Semjenov[3], for instance, a Marxist-Leninist of the USSR calls stratum a *part* of class; and Werner Hofmann, the late Marxian sociologist of Marburg University, gives a complete definition of three possible relations between class and stratum: "Firstly," he says, "the stratification structure of a society is the fine-drawn structure (or subdivisions, S.H.) of classes; secondly social strata exist *between* the classes; . . . thirdly, social strata exist besides the classes. . . .[4]"

I call this a classificatory way of defining the relation of class and stratum. Hofmann knows very well that there might exist a different logical relation. Without any connection with the former definition, he states later on: "Social classes are determined by the *fundamental* social relations of labour and appropriation; the *visible* system of stratification (ranking of professions and prestige, etc.) however, belongs to the *outward* form of social life."[5]

Three Questions

The unsolved contradiction between the two definitions is my problem; it seems to me that one has to ask three questions at least. First, is the concept of stratum, if used in any systematic class analysis of capitalist countries, restricted to a merely classificatory and descriptive content, and does it by this usage regain a quality, which Marxists elsewhere call bourgeois thinking?—Second, is the fact of stratified wealth, income etc. a phenomenon of mere appearance, which therefore can be studied on an empirical level only, and cannot be theoretically determined by the fundamental social relations of labour and appropriation?—Third, are classes *not* visible?! Do classes belong to the sphere of the "essence" of bourgeois society, but not to its outward "appearance"?

If you look at the writings of Marx and Engels in either an exegetical or philological manner in order to find general *definitions* of the terms class and stratum, you will be disappointed. Moreover, in contradiction with Marxist-Leninist sociology, the concept of *stratum* has no systematic relevance, either within the system of the Critique of Political Economy, or within the political writings, where it mostly is used in a metaphorical way. The analogy is taken from geology, or from tectonics, if you like. To prove this, I remember but one of the many famous passages in the "Manifesto": "The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air."[6]

In the same manifesto Marx and Engels also wrote of "the lower strata of the middle class" in the sense of stratum being a subdivision of class. However, although one will find a similar usage in a footnote of "Capital," Vol. 1, or somewhere else, one cannot conclude that the term stratum is a systematic category like class.

Nevertheless, it would be a false conclusion, too, if one would assume that the essence of "layers," "strata" and "stratification," i.e. the conceptual foundation of the empirically observable structure of the population as a whole and of the various classes, were *not* worked out in Marx' systematic analysis of modern society. I shall try to show to what extent this essence is developed, and in what relation it is to be seen with the category of class.

Class Structure of Bourgeois Society

It seems to be necessary to say a few words about the interpretation of Marx's works from which I am taking my argument. I believe that despite the incompleteness of the 52nd chapter in "Capital," Vol. III, the theory of class by Marx is completely developed. The system of the Critique of Political Economy *is* the class theory of bourgeois society, because it is the step by step representation of the inner relations of the economic forms, as such determining the social relations as class relations, and as such determining the *forms* of consciousness as class-bound consciousness. The general determination of class structure is in itself a momentum or part of the anatomy of bourgeois society. More exactly: it is the last point in the derivation process of the general economic laws of development of the capitalist mode of production.

I emphasise the word "general" determination of class structure. Both, investigation and representation of the economic forms of social relations in capitalism, do not coincide with a concrete historical stage of the class relations existing in a distinct capitalist country. There is a methodological difference to be made between 1. *the conceptual or ideal reproduction of the economic structure of society*—"the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness,[7] and 2. *the*

[3] W. S. Semjenov—*Kapitalismus und Klassen*, (Köln 1973; Moscow, 1969).

[4] Werner Hofmann—*Grundelemente der Wirtschaftsgesellschaft*, (Hamburg 1969), p. 35.

[5] *op. cit.* p. 63.

[6] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels—*Selected Works*, (in one volume), Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1968, p. 45.

[7] Karl Marx—A *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, *Preface*, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

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real formation of the social relations of production and reproduction as it exists in a definite country at a given stage of capitalist development. Any research into such real conditions, therefore, will have to start with the investigation of their "general type", or their pure form.

This means that we have to work out first the class structure of the bourgeois society as far as its necessary elements are concerned, before we are able to study the historically specific or accidental elements, which do modify, and which do have repercussions on the working of the nevertheless permanent tendencies and laws of development. The same is true, if we want to analyse and explain the *real stratification* of a given population in terms of gradual differentiation.

My thesis is that the analysis of the general structure of the material production not only reveals the cause of class structure and class conflict, but also that of gradation and of partial conflicts between "strata." This implies the thesis that research on stratification cannot be restricted to the surface of our society, nor to its "static" aspects—because both, class structure and gradual differentiation, are dynamic in reality and can only be explained adequately by the fundamental laws of motion of the social mode of production.

III STEPS OF GENERAL DERIVATION

Let me now mark out a few steps of general derivation, which I believe will provide us with the guiding thread of empirical studies in the social structure of advanced capitalist countries.

Any and every historical formation of society shows a specific distribution of the population. Its order is the result of the definite form of social production and reproduction of life. The analysis of the formation of *capitalist* society therefore, must start with the analysis of *capital* as a relation. The complete development of capital is based on the separation of the producers from their products—this separation is a general precondition as well as a result of capitalism. Therefore the dominating relation of production in bourgeois society is identical with the major distribution of its population: Capital and Labour as the two poles of the dominant relation of production are constituting the two classes of owners and producers of the means of production and of the "wealth of nations." I shall confine myself to the class of producers. This will suffice for my purpose.

Relations between Labour and Capital

It is an immanent tendency of capital to generalise the production of commodities, and with that to transform any labour into wage labour. But under this common form of wage labour there are subsumed different relations between labour and capital. Viewing wage labour from its appearance, it is differentiated or subdivided according to the mode of payment (wage or salaried workers), its legal definition (workers, employees, civil servants), its occupation and branch of occupation etc. Statistics are used, through these subdivisions to classify the total of the dependent, employed, occupied part of the population. Moreover, it is the way in which people who have the common experience to be forced to sell their labour power—see themselves.

But if you penetrate into the very core of the relation between capital and labour, you will find a different formation. Therefore, according to the economic form of production, the first step in our derivation is to define labour as producing commodities, and by this producing capital. Marx says (in *Grundrisse*), labour alone which produces capital, is wage labour in its "strictly economic meaning." Consequently, he calls that kind of labour, and only that kind, "productive labour."[8]

Productive and Non-Productive Labour

The specific economic form of productive labour is the foundation of the capitalist mode of production. Derived from this is the form of labour which is spent in the sphere of circulation of capital. As the process of circulation is a necessary phase of the total motion of capital, labour spent in the sphere of circulation is necessary labour. However, it is not productive labour, because in the sphere of circulation there is produced neither value, nor surplus-value.

Though commercial capital apparently makes profit by the exploitation of commercial workers, the labour power used in the different acts of metamorphosis (commodity-capital-commodity) is a source of costs—the faux frais of production—in so far as the process of capital as a whole is concerned. Therefore, the existence and the range of activities of commercial capital must be regarded as defined and determined by industrial capital, i.e. capital which is moving and growing by the use of productive labour power.

From the fact of the productiveness and non-productiveness of labour spent in the production of capital and of its circulation, there exists a different relation between capital and productive labour on one hand, and capital and non-productive labour on the other.

These two kinds of labour have in common the exchange of capital and labour power. Both kinds, whether they sell their labour power to an industrial

[8] Karl Marx—*Resultate des unmittelbaren Produktionsprozesses*, (Frankfurt/Main 1969) p. 64: ("As the immediate end and the primary product of capitalist production is surplus-value, the only productive labour is labour producing surplus-value.")

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capitalist or to a commercial one, are separated from the means of production and they are paid only for that part of a day's work which is necessary for the reproduction of their labour power. But they differ from each other by the directness or indirectness of their part in the process of production of value. From this follows different forms of dependency on the fluctuation of capital, on its attraction and repulsion of labour power, on its crises, etc. From this also follow different forms of consciousness. Summing up this step, I should say that we have got *two factions* in the working class. The source of their income, that is, wages for selling labour power to capital is the same for both. The economic form of their labour, however, is not the same.

A Third Faction

If we go further, i.e. beyond the immediate relation of labour and capital, we find a *third faction* in the working class, which constitutes another kind of non-productive labour. The source of income is also wages, though mostly paid as a "salary." However, the source is not the immediate exchange of capital and labour, but the revenues of either the state (taxes), or unions, professional organisations etc. As with all other non-productive labour, the existence and development of this section of social reproduction, above all the state and its social functions, is dependent on the existence and stage of productive labour employed by industrial capital. Much of this non-productive labour is also socially necessary, apart from its mere service functions, and it is paid by these institutions according to the average costs of its labour power.

Thus these workers share important conditions of life with the workers employed by capital, but they are less directly exposed to the cyclical fluctuations of capital accumulation, and usually they are in a relatively privileged situation by being given special forms of job security and pension schemes. The forms of their consciousness are constituted by their derived position in relation to the immediate antagonism of capital and wage labour. Special illusions can develop on the basis of service and loyalty to a providing master, and above all on that of the seemingly neutral functions of the state.

Up to now, we have studied the different economic forms of wage labour. This step in the general derivation of economically determined social structure has disclosed a formation of the working class, which as such has nothing to do with stratification and which in fact is hidden from the workers themselves. Our next step will bring us nearer to the visible reality and to the level of perception. However, the level we shall reach, is not identical with the real class structure and with class formation in a given country.

Economic Definition of Stratum

The conception of stratification is based on the economic forms. I shall demonstrate this with one faction of labour only, i.e. productive labour. Marx calls the notion "productive labour", as defined above, a *narrow distinction*. If you look at work processes as abstracted from their special economic forms, any labour will be productive as long as its product has use value. If exchange value and thus surplus value becomes the only end of production, however, the meaning of productive labour is correspondingly limited. Marx shows in "Capital", how in a logical manner the notion is *widened* on its limited basis. That is to say, in the historical as well as logical process of transformation of absolute surplus-value into relative surplus-value, and from formal subsumption of labour under capital into its real subsumption, capital eventually finds a form of self-reproduction which is large scale industry. The forms of co-operation and hierarchy established in the process which consists of specialised handicraft, is replaced by the division of labour in the modern factory with its widespread differentiation and complex forms.

Those members of the labour force who are trained in natural science and in technology are growing in numbers because of the increasingly important part which science plays in the performance of production. Thus the whole body of productive labour has become an organic system, with its various members working together, some more with their hands, others more with their brains. They are bound to manual or non-manual functions, to administering, executive or directing functions. These functions, moreover have become more or less ossified, and as such have developed certain degrees of autonomy and have even become partially adverse to one another. It is the necessary tendency of economising the use of labour power which leads to dilation processes at the higher levels of qualified labour too. This tendency, however, does not affect the process of increasing the complexity of labour power employed by capital.

With this, I wanted to indicate the economic reasons for a stratified labour body. The measure of stratification is the different value of labour power. The differences in value correspond to the different costs of production and reproduction of the labour power. Its result is the differentiation of wages.

So far, this short representation of an economic definition of strata, or rather of the construct of strata derived from the form of social production, has been confined to productive labour. The next step leads us to similar processes of diversification in the faction of non-productive labour, as employed by capital in order to fulfil the functions of circulation. Growing commercial capital, as a result of the

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extension of industrial production, uses machinery too—and is economical in the use of labour power—thus introducing similar forms of organisation and division of labour to those originally experienced only in factories. The consequence is a highly differentiated body of commercial labour, with workers of highly differing kinds of training, as well as different grades and intensity of training. As a result of this there are more or less clear-cut divergencies in income which are no less than in the faction of productive workers. In the same way this explanation of economically produced stratification can be adapted to explain the differentiation of non-productive workers constituting the third faction of the working class, i.e. civil servants and other functionaries.

"Visible" Stratification of the Population

With this step we reach the level of "visible" stratification of the population. I am still however omitting those elements which had originated from the specific conditions of a distinct country; that is, I am still abstracting from the relevance of "classes," "estates" and other factors which do not belong to the necessary elements of *capitalist* forms of production, but belong either to historically earlier forms or to mere contingency. The point is, that in everyday life you can *see* the strata of, say, skilled and unskilled workers, you can see the professions, and branches, and, of course, you can classify income groups throughout the factions of the working class, as well as throughout the whole population, including the farmers and the petite bourgeoisie in the towns, independent lawyers, engineers, architects, even small capitalists who own the means of their production, however little it may be, and they can be grouped by the sameness of their work content, or even subsumed under the same "class" of income, e.g. with a trained worker sharing the same level of income as a shop-keeper.

In any one of these cases, the underlying *economic form of labour is veiled.* As to wage labour, it seems to be all too obvious that the strata of similar income groups are running across the border lines of the factions defined above. Of course, there are *similar levels of education*, which is a precondition for entering one of the various positions in the functionally and hierarchically differentiated organisations of work, either in the sphere of production, or in the sphere of circulation. There are *similar statuses* of non-manual as opposed to the manual workers, whether they work in an office of the productive staff, or in a commercial corporation, or in government bureaucracy. The plausibility of distinguishing the whole lot of wage labourers by the level of education, which they have got and by which the income levels are roughly determined, is nourished by similar chances of life, by work conditions—which may be similar as to the range of autonomy and authority, manual performance or brain work etc.—and last, but not least, by similar "ways of life," "mentalities," "images of society," special professional illusions, etc. This plausibility, however, is restricted to an empiricist as well as static view of the social scene. It will be shattered as soon as one tries to explain empirical phenomena in a historical perspective.

IV SOME RESULTS OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

To illustrate this, I shall refer to some results of three empirical studies from the Sociological Institute of the Free University of West Berlin. They all started from a methodological interpretation of Marx as indicated above, and they used this method as their guiding thread. One is concerned with changes in the social structure of the Federal Republic of Germany,[9] another studied the process of white-collar unionism from the beginning of this century up to the seizure of power by Fascism in Germany, forty years ago,[10] and the third is a study of Technicians and Professional Engineers.[11]

Class Structure in German Federal Republic

The first study shows that in the period of 1950 to 1970 there is a clear correlation between the changing structure of employment and the cyclical process of capital accumulation. Furthermore, it can prove that productive workers have been significantly more exposed to the economic fluctuations than non-productive workers of capital, and that these two factions of the West German working class put together were much more exposed to the cycles than the non-productive workers employed by government etc. (paid from the revenues of the classes, not immediately by capital). Another result which seems to be of some importance comes from decoding the juridical classification of workers and salaried employees (Arbeiter und Angestellte). In the process of material production productive workers on the whole are working immediately with machines but the salaried employees are "aggregated" to the immediate production, their

[9] Projekt Klassenanalyse—*Materialien zur Klassenstruktur der BRD 1950-1970* two volumes, Berlin (West) 1973/74.

[10] Ulf Kadritzke—*Angestellte—die geduldigen Arbeiter*, Frankfurt/Main, 1975.

[11] Niels Beckenbach, H. J. Braczyk, Sebastian Herkommer, Thomas Malsch, Heiner Stuch: *Klassenlage und Bewusstseinsformen Wissenschaftlisch-technischer Lohnarbeiter*, Frankfurt/Main 1973. From the same authors: *Ingenieure und Techniker in der Industrie. Eine empirische Untersuchung uber Bewusstsein und Interessenorientierung*, Frankfurt/Main, 1975.

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functions being more complex and their training consequently more complicated. They share the higher value of their labour power and the greater autonomy in their work situations with the majority —or if you prefer; average—of the non-productive employees working in the sphere of circulation.

The result is that a stratification line between common work and complicated work, which is an actual differentiation of the class of wage labourers, is concealing the underlying sub-division according to the economic form of work, and above all is still enforced by the status differentiation of workers and salaried employees. The authors of the research project concluded from this that they had found one important key to analyse the various forms of class consciousness by showing the causes and different levels of class illusions: "Strata" veiling the economic relations of production.

The "Patient" Workers

The second study is occupied with salaried employees only. Its author Ulf Kadritzke, calls them the "Patient Workers." Actually, he shows the periods in the history of the German Reich when parts of them became impatient with their social situation and joined the labour movement. Again the point is to decode the notion "Angestellte" (salaried employee) as a primarily politically, not economically constituted status group, which, however, has its foundation in a functional differentiation of the whole labour body.

The historical study proves that it is the productive part of the salaried employees which is first to be seized by unionism and to be attracted by strike activities of the unions. But it also proves that the generalisation of real subsumption of labour under the laws of capitalist production is resulting in a growing unification of the productive as well as non-productive subdivisions of the salaried employees with the workers in immediate production.

Consciousness of Technicians and Professional Engineers

The third study I want to mention is narrower in its scope and is not historical in the same manner as the research mentioned before. Technicians and professional engineers were selected only as far as they are part of the productive faction of the working class. What they had in common was employment as salaried employees, training in natural science, engineering and technology, doing complicated work, and above all being productive workers in an immediate relation with industrial capital.

The results of the interviewing show distinct forms of consciousness among technicians and engineers originating from the fact of wage labour, and they show distinct interpretations of their situation originating from the facts of brainwork, participation in the authority structure of production, and experiencing the subsumption of brainwork under the increasing tendencies of fluctuation, dilation etc. The phenomenon of stratification of complicated work itself, within one faction, is clearly visible in the differences of unionism in this group: professional illusions are definitely less significant among technicians than among professional engineers. Those engineers who are highest in terms of training, authority and income are on the whole least prepared to join in workers' unions, in strikes and to identify themselves with the political goals of the labour movement. But they do favour an intermediate form of organisation, that of professional unions, as soon as they had experienced job insecurity, increasing standardisation and growing intensity of their work themselves. We have reason to assume that in West Germany these tendencies towards forms of consciousness of wage labourers are more developed among productive brain-workers than among commercial ones.

Increasing Unification

A general impression of the empirical studies just mentioned is an increasing unification of the nevertheless highly differentiated class of labourers. It seems to us that the general laws of motion of capital are still working towards a dichotomy of the class structure, and that those classes which originate in pre-capitalist forms of production will lose their remaining social and political influence, if not vanish altogether. As to elements not necessary, such as contingencies of political, religious, and ethnic specifities, it seems to us that these are either accelerating or slowing down the process, but they are not a guarantee of the preservation of capitalism as a social form of production.

V THESES FOR DISCUSSION

After the illustrations, I resume my argument and I want to expose the following theses to further discussion:

1. In the analysis of the social structure of advanced capitalist countries, the concept of stratum is relevant in relation to the concept of class only. As far as I can see, there is no controversy about this point among Marxists. Unsolved problems exist concerning the logical relation of the two concepts. Which way class analyses are actually carried through and what political consequences are drawn from the findings seems to depend on the interpretation of the system of the Critique of Political Economy.

2. The concept of class reflects the main economic formation of bourgeois society, constituted by the proceeding antagonism of capital and labour. Through this dominant relation, the role and

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position of intermediate and transitional classes springing from earlier forms of social production, are defined.

3. The concept of stratum does not reflect a special relation of men to the economic conditions of social production. Speaking in a scientific sense, and not merely metaphorical, of strata "between" or "besides" classes, is inexact and confusing. Moreover, using the terms "middle class" and "middle stratum" does more or less unintentionally lead to a perception of class stratification with the class of capitalists ranking highest and the working class at the bottom of the scale. This distorted, not merely subjective, perception of a given population is palliating the dynamic character of class relations.

Use of the Concept of Stratum

4. The concept of stratum as used in class analysis should be used in a very restricted manner only. It is not a systematic category. Its definition, however, must be based on the fundamental categories of the "anatomy of bourgeois society." Derived from the definitions of the economic forms, capital and labour, the concept of stratum can serve as an instrument to express certain aspects of the motion of social relations as they are appearing on the surface of society. As a category of an actual gradation, which in the prosperous periods of capitalism is able to hide the most effective social cleavages from perception, it must systematically be related to the historically specific form of production.

5. Apart from describing the structure of a population as "stratified" (stratification of the whole population) which reflects a false perception of the class society, the concept of stratum can be used as a term standing for certain gradual divergencies within a class. But it is not an immediate classificatory subdivision of class. Logically, stratum and class are mediated by the factions of classes which spring from the economic forms of labour (productive and non-productive labour) and capital (industrial and commercial capital etc.) respectively.

This is the central point of my argument: Any sociological research will be reproducing surface phenomena only, and will be content with definitions of the so-called stratum of white-collar workers, or salaried employees, of the stratum of "technical intelligentsia" or New Working Class, and, of course, of the New Middle Class, unless consideration is given to the mediating role of economically defined factions. This is so for two reasons. Firstly, apart from the false construction of a class border between manuals and non-manuals, there is underlying any one of these definitions a derived criterion like content of work, or legal status, so that they cannot serve to explain the contradictory dynamics of the social position of these groupings. Secondly, as the forms of consciousness are determined by the economic form of labour, it is primarily these economic forms and not similar training, similar content of work, and similar status, which—together with these secondary elements—can explain the contradictory process of insight into the real motion of modern society.

6. The concept of stratum as used in class analysis is an objective category which is restricted in its use. Though it is not reflecting an economic form it cannot be defined by subjective criteria. Stratification is not brought about by thinking of people, or by their accepting norms, etc.; rather, the ideas they have about their own social position and about the position of others, and the norms they accept, must be explained by the general formation of social production and by the specific conditions which differentiate the population according to functional and gradual dimensions.

Unity in Action, not Alliance

7. In so far as these ideas include an image of stratified society offering chances of individual success and promotion, they are an expression of an objectively based appearance. In smooth periods of capital accumulation these illusions will also be enforced among production workers and they will be stronger among those who have a greater "market capacity" as well as more autonomy in their work situations. This will be different in the uneasy periods, when market and work autonomy are threatened. In these situations it will be the task of the unions, and of the most progressive parts of the labour movement, consciously to accelerate the unification process of the working class. From an analysis of this kind there would have to follow the strategy of unity in action, and not the strategy of alliance because any alliance is based on the recognition of objective interests which originate from distinct class positions. If one were to apply to non-manuals or to brain workers the term class, and consequently to treat them as allies, not as class members, one would enforce their illusions rather than dissolve them.

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Thoughts on Leisure and Sport

Terry Bushell

Part 2—Sport

(We print below the second of two articles on leisure and sport by Terry Bushell, Morning Star *sports correspondent, qualified Football Association coach and author of a Communist Party pamphlet* Leisure and Recreation in Britain Today)

Sport has been manipulated by political, social and economic forces for thousands of years, yet there is hardly any socialist writing on it. The ancient Greeks and Romans, British kings, the emergent capitalist class in the Industrial Revolution, the nazis, all were very much concerned with sport to the detriment of sport, as is the *apartheid* regime in South Africa today. Conversely, countries like the German Democratic Republic, the Soviet Union and Cuba have encouraged mass participation in sport to ensure a healthy population. Never has it been true that sport is exempt from politics, that it can escape the pressures exerted by society.

In discussion about its place on the general map of human activities and interests, there is a tendency to talk of it as if it were still the relatively unified phenomenon that it was before the Industrial Revolution. In fact, socially in Britain now there are three types of sport: bourgeois sport, working-class sport and commercialised sport. The dividing lines are blurred. Some sports are bourgeois in one region and working-class in another, and commercialised sport is made up of all those participants, of whatever class, who do it for money.

No sport transcends class. A few working-class people taking weekly riding lessons does not make equestrian sport proletarian. The same principle applies to tennis and some other sports, and it also applies vice versa.

(I) ARISTOCRATIC SPORT

Aristocrats like to kill things. This predilection has given sport a bad name, for the word sport came to be identified with hunting and killing, and the word game with the animals hunted and killed. Samuel Johnson said that it was "very strange and very melancholy that the paucity of human pleasures should persuade us ever to call hunting one of them" and that it was "no diversion at all," diversion being his word for recreation. Oscar Wilde called hunting, "The unspeakable chasing the uneatable."

Any normal person would agree with Johnson and Wilde. The ruling class took to hunting as a duck takes to water for two reasons: its predatory habits and its affinity with horses. In a *Punch* cartoon of 1908 a convalescent child is saying, "I'm much better now, Nurse. Will you please put me at the window? I feel I could kill a fly." And after suffragette Emily Davison had thrown herself under the king's horse in the 1913 Derby, the king expressed concern for the horse without mentioning the woman. Since the emergence of a parasite class, its occupations have remained the same: government, war, sports and religion. Of the sports, anything to do with fancy-bred horses has always been highly esteemed, for they also are expensive and useless, and if, seated on one of these creatures, the predators of the human race can kill things as well, why, they are as happy as a dog with two tails.

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At the beginning of the nineteenth century, all organised and prominent sport was aristocratic. In the middle of the century the middle classes adapted to urban conditions the old rural sports such as the crude running and jumping contests and numberless-a-side football, and invented their own game, lawn tennis. By the end of the century the working class had taken up the new-style football in great numbers, leaving to the bourgeoisie the sports which needed more time, space or money.

(II) THE DEBATE ON SPORT

Although a lot of Chartists had vigorously attacked the old rural sports which for them symbolised a bygone age of ignorant rusticity, they nevertheless failed to foresee the recreational future. Chartists and working-class radicals mistakenly thought that the mechanics' institutes and the public libraries they had so laboriously fought for would be the growth points of the new leisure. A typical pamphlet, published by an aging Chartist at the end of the 1860s, had among its demands wide public facilities for cultural recreation, and those Chartists who survived into the 1890s lamented the decline in popular concern with politics and self-education, and the boom in pastimes "absolutely unknown to the general populace 40 years ago."

These old Chartists, and their predecessors, were joining a debate which has been going on for as long as sport itself, a debate conducted by the ancient Greeks and Romans, and continued in the houses of parliament this century. There are three sides: one, those who would do away with all sport altogether; two, those who see the value of sport in some ulterior end such as fitness or keeping bored people off the streets; and three, those who maintain that sport contains its own justification within itself. There have been very few of the latter, it being a new concept, and most of those few have found it very hard to avoid bringing in a strictly utilitarian justification. I must admit I find it difficult myself, even though I do believe that leaping about and running are very great natural pleasures, the loss of which as we get older must be counted as a big one and sad, like the way a lot of people lose the ability to laugh as babies and children laugh.

Veblen's Views

Equally few people have dismissed sport altogether. Most philosophers with pretensions to defining culture have ignored sport, not even taking the trouble to dismiss or condemn it, and those swarms of scribes throughout history who railed against working people's recreations tacitly accepted aristocrats' blood sports. To my knowledge, only one serious writer has denounced all sport totally with the attack based on some informed social outlook. Thorstein Veblen, in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), said that all sport is an expression of "an attitude of emulative ferocity," entered upon "with a view to gaining repute for prowess." Veblen went on to say that the temperament which inclines men to sport is essentially a boyish temperament. "The addiction to sports, therefore, in a peculiar degree marks an arrested development of the man's moral nature."

The theme of his book being the characteristics of the leisure class, and how these characteristics pervade all activities throughout society, Veblen maintains that sport has been accepted because it fulfils the leisure-class canon of "strict and comprehensive futility."

Against this canon, he says, is ranged the instinct of workmanship, which demands purposeful action; and:

> "So long as the individual is but slightly gifted with reflection or with a sense of the ulterior trend of his actions—so long as his life is substantially a life of naïve, impulsive action—so long the immediate and unreflected purposefulness of sports, in the way of an expression of dominance, will measurably satisfy his instinct of workmanship. . . . It is by meeting these two requirements, of ulterior wastefulness and proximate purposefulness, that any given employment holds its place as a traditional and habitual mode of decorous recreation."

Veblen continues:

> "It has been said, not inaptly, that the relation of football to physical culture is much the same as that of the bull-fight to agriculture. Serviceability for these lusory institutions requires sedulous training or breeding. The material used, whether brute or human, is subjected to careful selection and discipline, in order to secure and accentuate certain aptitudes and propensities which are characteristic of the ferine state, and which tend to obsolescence under domestication." The aptitudes and propensities required are ferocity and cunning—force and fraud (Veblen is talking of American football, which has more built-in ferocity than our football, but of the many styles of soccer played throughout the world the British style has the largest measure of accepted ferocity).

He goes on:

> "Ferocity and cunning are of no use to the community except in its hostile dealings with other communities; and they are useful to the individual only because there is so large a proportion of the same traits actively present in the

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> human environment to which he is exposed. Any individual who enters the competitive struggle without the due endowment of these traits is at a disadvantage, somewhat as a hornless steer would find himself at a disadvantage in a drove of horned cattle."

Veblen concludes his denunciation with the observation, similar to mine earlier, that "everyday speech can scarcely be employed in discussing this class of aptitudes and activities without implying deprecation or apology. . . . There is a feeling —usually vague and not commonly avowed in so many words by the apologist himself, but ordinarily perceptible in the manner of his discourse— that these sports . . . do not altogether commend themselves to common sense."

(III) SPORT FOR WHAT?

The most common view is that sport is a useful means to various ends. One of the few to protest at this view was Nye Bevan in 1937, when he objected to the Physical Training and Recreation Bill in parliament. The government view was that the only justification for giving money to sport was "to prevent the idle use of leisure." Bevan attacked the Bill for perpetuating the class structure of sport, arguing that the desire to play a game was justification in itself. There was no need to seek justification in the cause of national well-being. "The idea that you must borrow some justification for playing is one of the worst legacies of the Puritan Revolution," he said, going on to accuse the government of pushing physical training on the masses because it was easier and cheaper than providing the facilities and playing fields which the ruling class and middle classes enjoyed.

"This idea that you must get all the boys and girls in rows, like chocolate soldiers," he said, "and make them go through evolutions, is a miserable substitute for giving them sufficient playgrounds in which they can play their own games in their own ways." He was resisting the imposition on the working class of recreation which was different in kind from that enjoyed by the upper classes. Physical training reminded working-class people of when they formed "rows of chocolate soldiers" in playground and barrack square. It reeked of deprivation. Bevan raised the issue that the Bill was a measure designed to perpetuate in recreation and sport that deprivation and an educational system which was felt to be in need of change.

Comprehensive schooling has come in since then, but so have the stringent education cuts; and any real improvement in attitudes towards school sport is dependent on increased facilities. Education is the key to most interests in later life. A lot of people hate mathematics with an abhorrence so strong it must be due to bad teaching methods at an impressionable age. So it is with millions of people and physical recreation. Education, apart from determining whether people will be turned off sport for life, influences sporting activity through differing provision (rugby at grammar schools, soccer at comprehensives) and through the promotion of certain values.

Sport and Competition

Higher education seems to be associated with an active as opposed to a passive relationship with sport, with a greater degree of participation, with sports not linked to gambling, and to the more reflective, "aesthetic" activities such as cricket and rambling. Higher levels of education go together with reduced television viewing, and greater participation in crafts and hobbies and intellectual pursuits which need commitment and discipline.

There is increasing concern by a growing number of teachers and parents at the tendency to introduce overt competition into everything. In any one race, in any one competition, there is only one winner. Most people who take part in sport are "losers." It is no wonder most children, the "losers," opt out as soon as they can, and a lot of responsible adults take the view that other activities, such as music or studying an aspect of nature, can teach just as much about discipline and self-control as sport.

(IV) INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The demise of religion has led to a more enlightened look at the relationship of mind and body. The "dualist" idea has dominated in the past, and the image of physical recreation and sport suffered as a result of the body being blamed for all the human ills under the sun. We know now that a lot of seemingly physical diseases originate in the mind. Of course, the "sound mind in a healthy body" philosophy is not a new one— Hippocrates and Galen knew that mind and body are parts of an integral whole, and the concept was dominant in the rise of physical training this century—but never before has it been appreciated to what extent the health of one is vital to the health of the other.

Never before also has the importance of play in human affairs been realised. Theories as to why it is so important vary enormously, including: it is needed to get rid of surplus energy; it is a means of recovering from fatigue; it is preparation for adult life; it has a physical basis and is associated with bodily changes occurring during growth; it is a reliving of our savage ancestral activities; it expresses joy; it is motivated by the instinct of rivalry; it is used to overcome inferiority complexes. Each theory contributes to the discussion

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of the function of play.

The penultimate theory was adopted by Veblen in his denunciation of sport. It will be argued that you can play and take physical exercise without it being sport. You can go for a run in the park without competing in an athletics meeting. You can go for a swim without entering in a gala. But I bet when Adam and Eve were walking in their garden, at some point one of them said, "Race you to the apple tree." Children want to test their skill, speed and strength against each other all the time. It seems to be a pretty basic urge.

Throughout history, only people deprived of all leisure totally—slaves in name or fact—have not taken part in sports. Lewis Grassic Gibbon says in his novel *Spartacus,* of slaves 100 years BC: "They had ceased to weep and sing and stare, and challenge one another to racings and wrestlings."

Sport and the Working Class

Cardinal Newman said in 1851 (when criticising Cato for estimating everything "by what it produced"): "Things which can bear to be cut off from everything else and yet persist in living must have life in themselves." In Newman's lifetime working people's sport had certainly been cut off from everything else. Only three sports survived in the Industrial Revolution, like plants growing where light and air seem inadequate. Cricket, boxing and horse-racing survived, and all three owed their survival to the love of gambling and cultivation by rich patrons: hardly a healthy growth, and indeed all three were disreputable rackets.

And what was the first thing the working people wanted when they had won themselves some leisure? Sport. We have already mentioned the concern of the Chartists at this preference, and Trotsky said that the workers were deflected from politics by sport.

But here are some strange facts: the two decades which saw the establishment of modern sport also saw the big extension of male suffrage. At the same time as thousands of sports clubs were being formed, there was growing the First Workers' International, the biggest international organisation since the Crusades. In the year that Arsenal FC was founded by workers at the Woolwich Arsenal (1886) the windows of upper-class clubs in Pall Mall were smashed following a meeting in Trafalgar Square; Blackpool FC was formed in the year of Bloody Sunday (1887); the year of Sheffield United's foundation (1889) was the year of the important strike for the Dockers' Tanner. The disparate forces of labour were marshalling their energies and the trade union movement flexing its muscles (in 1888 alone there were 509 strikes) while the membership of the Football Association was rising from 50 clubs in 1871 to 10,100 in 1905.

Millions of men both played football and attended trade union meetings. Both institutions grew enormously at exactly the same time. There is no contradiction or anomaly. Indeed, is it not possible that men brought to their union meeting aptitudes learnt while forming their sports clubs?

The new sports differ from the old in one very important respect. They need organising. In the old game of football, on each traditional day of its playing everyone from the villages concerned casually trooped off to the fields where it took place: in the new game, you play a different team each week, in different places, and the result has to be recorded to be incorporated in a league. You have to make sure the colours of the opposing team do not clash with yours; you have to see about a referee and about transport, and ensure that your centre-forward has not got ideas about a dirty week-end out of town. You have to know how much everything costs and how to arrange the best discount, and how to communicate unambiguously with your opponents.

These are specific skills; there are also skills which relate to groups of people whatever activity they are pursuing. Such skills have to be learnt through a particular activity, but their application is general; what is learnt in connection with football has at least some relevance to active participation in the union or the political party.

Thousands of working-class people, alienated from work and brought up outside the cosy subculture of left-wing politics, have learnt about achievement and the taking on of responsibility only from sport.

(V) COMMERCIALISED SPORT

The worst that can be said of working-class sport is that it is a waste of time. Objections to commercialised sport are much more serious.

About 594 BC, says Plutarch, Solon decreed that Athenian writers at the Isthmian and Olympic Games should receive 100 drachmae and 500 drachmae respectively. Sports competition from then on was an economically viable career for those with enough talent or strength. The athletes incurred the wrath of the more intellectual, philosophical of their compatriots, such as Aristotle, Aristophanes, Xenophon and Euripides, but alongside the growth of this new career there grew other careers which to us seem much more reprehensible. Any reader of Howard Fast's novel about Spartacus will recall the character who made a fortune buying slaves and selling them as gladiators.

Pythagoras said that life is like "the great and crowded assembly at the Olympic Games. Some exercise the body in order to win glory in the con-

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tests; others bring merchandise there to sell for profit." In short, the money men had arrived.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, commercialised sport continued in this country in the form of fencing tuition, cudgelling, prize-fighting, horse-racing, cock-fighting and professional running. Before the last century, however, the spectators at the contests gathered spontaneously and the money of a handful of wealthy patrons enabled the events to take place. In the last hundred years, the money has come in the form of shillings and pence from thousands of pockets rather than pounds and pounds from the wallet of one rich man.

"Bread and Circuses"

Not always were clubs and competitions started with the intention of making large amounts of money. A lot of the early football clubs were swamped by the unexpected flood of spectators, for whom little provision had been made and whose enthusiasm was (as it still is) an embarrassment to the authorities, who much prefer "rows of chocolate soldiers." But once the ball was rolling —or, rather, once millions of people were turning up regularly each week to *watch* the ball rolling— of course the piggy little eyes of the money men lit up and they waddled to gorge at the trough.

The most serious objection to commercialised sport, however, is not the presence of the money men, but the attitude of the ruling class. If Trotsky meant *commercialised* sport when he spoke of sport diverting people from politics, he was voicing an opinion held by many people before him and many since. And if it is true, surely the ruling class are aware of it, and encourage it? The "bread and circuses" philosophy of the rulers of declining Rome is well known, even to us plebs, and our rulers are nothing if not classical scholars. They surely will also have read Montaigne's essays, and here is what that humane but nevertheless aristocratic Frenchman had to say in the sixteenth century:

> "Wise administrators take care to assemble and unite their citizens, not only for the serious duties of religion, but for sports and spectacles as well, to the enhancement of good-fellowship and friendship among them. And no more orderly amusements could be found for them than those that take place with everyone present and beneath the eye of the magistrate himself. For my part, I should think it reasonable if the magistrate and the prince were sometimes to give the people a show at their expense, out of paternal kindness and affection, and if in populous cities there should be places appointed and set apart for these spectacles—as a diversion from worse actions performed in secret."

There you have it, straight from the horse's mouth. No doubt when Montaigne was mayor of Bordeaux from 1581 to 1585 the citizens of Bordeaux never went short of "spectacles," and therefore no doubt Bordeaux in those years was free of sinister plotting to destroy the Western way of life.

(VI) PROFESSIONALS AND AMATEURS

Speaking of the Western way of life the Common Market countries have held two conferences on sport, top-level ministers attending each. The report of the second conference, early last year, said:

> "Playing and watching are complementary, not contradictory activities. At its best elite sport is inspirational—a stimulus to greater, as well as better, participation. It is a source of pleasure to countless people including many who are elderly or disabled. It has a place alongside the arts; true, its aesthetic and dramatic elements are impermanent and incidental, but so also are they spontaneous and uncontrived."

It also said: "No attempt should be made to separate high level performance from recreational sport—any participant with ambition and ability has the right to become a champion," and this is a key factor in any defence of top-level sport. One of the attractions of professional football for millions of men is that they have played the game themselves. Participation in any sport in childhood and adolescence engages you in a series of deep and persisting identifications. After spending your youthful weekends playing football in the local parks you almost inevitably end up a life-long ardent supporter of the local League club.

You get the impression sometimes that everyone who has ever played football "had a trial with" some League club or other, and at any one time every League club will have on its books several local players, men who played their early football in the same competitions and in the same parks as the thousands of men who go to watch them perform at the higher level. The link between the Cup Final at Wembley and a game from the Eltham and District League is clear and strong. Billy Bonds, captain of FA Cup holders West Ham, has played in both.

Vocation and Livelihood

The trouble is, in this pyramid, values and attitudes permeate *down*, from the professionals to the amateurs; and the values and attitudes of professional sport are generally something we can do without. Professional footballers in particular, cut off from the real world of work and production, and living in a particularly competitive

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sphere, tend to soak up undiluted some of the more vicious, divisive aspects of the prevailing ideology. This is as inevitable as the swilling of the money men and the manufacturing of stars, incidents and soppy "discussion" by the gutter press. In a different political climate, the professionals will be different.

On May 8 last year Portugal's First Division players agreed to strike to force the abolition of transfer fees. Two days later transfer fees were abolished. The man who called the successful strike, Artur Jorge, head of the players' union and a candidate for the Portuguese Democratic Movement, plays for Benfica, top Portuguese club and one of the most famous in the world. In May also, the players agreed to arrange several matches among themselves to raise funds for their colleagues in a club called Olhanense, who had not been paid for three months.

Full-time athletes are a natural consequence of the pursuit of excellence. Entrepreneurs are a natural consequence of the pursuit of money. The former can easily survive without the latter. We do not advocate ceasing to live in houses because of the existence of landlords. A distinction between amateurs and professionals is dangerously close to the distinction between work and play insisted upon by our class enemies and refuted by us. Indeed, the distinction was formulated by the upper classes to keep the plebs out of their private gardens of leisure.

The original edifice of qualifications and laws defining amateurs and professionals had nothing to do with money. They were blatantly about class. "Artisans" and "mechanics" specifically were banned from organisations and competitions. The vast majority of people have never been able to separate vocation from means of livelihood. The tiny minority who did not need to work in order to live could, and did, maintain that their pursuits therefore were engaged in for the love of the thing, the word amateur originally meaning literally "lover." It seemed to follow naturally from this that those who did the same things but in so doing made a living from it, were inspired by "ignoble" motives and lacked integrity.

Dilemmas

This manifestation of the class war has harmed sport in capitalist countries to a considerable degree (helped by inadequate facilities and bad teaching methods!) and goes a long way to explaining why sport, of all the leisure activities, has had so many heart-searching dilemmas to face. Some weird ideas have been allowed to spread almost unchallenged. Concern is often expressed, for instance, at so many people watching rather than doing, without the same concern being expressed at spectatorism in other spheres: going to the theatre in fact is a highly esteemed "activity."

Music has exactly the same cultural pattern as football. Huge numbers of young people, loving the activity, try to make a career of it; most fail, but their love and interest continue, usually to the extent of attending the performances of those who have made it. Looked at in this way, pro football can more easily be defended than pop music, for at least only those footballers with genuine talent make it to the top. In football "stars" are manufactured out of players already in the top division. In pop music, the most detailed manipulation and corruption shoves performers devoid of talent into the limelight of top billings. During the hundred years since sport's legislators faced the dangers of professionalism, cases of corruption (in this country at any rate) have been astonishingly rare.

Yet the idea persists that play is noble while spectacles are ignoble. Certainly, play and display in top sport are precariously balanced, and, once that balance is upset, the activity becomes something else, not sport. Pro wrestling is drama, now, with heroes and villains and fixed endings. Pro boxing, dominated by American gangsters, is so susceptible to corruption that only an outstanding performer like Muhammad Ali can keep alive mass interest in it.

I have actually seen it written (in an American essay) that games are inherently moral and ennobling while spectacles are inherently immoral and debasing. Such a generalisation is patently absurd. Some of the games children play are horrifying, while in socialist countries spectacles such as the Spartakiads are positively inspiring. Named after Spartacus, there have been two this year, one in Czechoslovakia which marked the 30th anniversary of liberation from nazi rule, and one for children and youth in the German Democratic Republic, in which the best 10,000 young people out of four million entries competed in Berlin. The *Spartakiad* is firmly anchored in the GDR's overall youth policy, and GDR commentators stress that it is not only about winners. The sports editor of *Junge Welt* said: "Sport in the life of our socialist society is something fine, important and useful."

(VII) IN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

When Trofimov is asked in Chekhov's play *The Cherry Orchard* if he is still a student, and he replies, "I expect I shall be a student to the end of my days," it seems he could have been speaking for thousands of top sports-people this century. Roger Bannister, later chairman of the Sports Council, was one of a long line of athletes who have realised that being a medical student fits in with modern training while being a qualified doctor does not.

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Top performers in the socialist countries, in theory part-timers, spend as much time training, travelling and competing as do top performers here; but no sports person in the world trains all day, and socialist athletes genuinely do have other careers, to which they devote themselves when their career in sport is ended. Being young, most of them naturally have not finished their education: they are students. Hacks on capitalist papers exploit this to the full, pointing time and again to "Communist cynicism."

Of course, some abuse the system. A *Pravda* investigation in 1962 found 16 professional footballers earning 200 roubles a month listed as farm workers. *Pravda* said: "There are too many footballers who neither sow nor reap but are being kept at a cost of thousands of roubles to the state." Also, there is resentment in all socialist countries at international athletes seeming to have no trouble getting the house of their choice, leaping to the front of housing lists to do so.

Gambling exists, but only small amounts of money are involved. The "something-for-nothing" mentality prevailing here (a mentality based on truth as far as the bookies are concerned but on a myth when it comes to the gamblers) does not arise in the forms of gambling in the socialist countries, where the main benefactor is sport itself: the surplus is fed back into sport and physical recreation. (Most Western European countries also have state-run lotteries or pools for the benefit of sport at all levels.)

And in a Socialist Britain

Would professional sport survive in a socialist Britain? The question was asked by Stanley Levenson in the *Morning Star* last March, the conclusion being: "Far better to have no gladiators."

Levenson says: "Unlike countries which are already socialist, we have a long tradition of professional sport, strongly supported, indeed financed to a large extent, by the working class." None of the socialist countries except Cuba had much commercialised sport before their revolutions, so there is no experience, good or bad, for us to look at. (Before the revolution in Cuba, sport, like everything else, was under United States' control and riddled with corruption. The Cubans had no choice but to ban it and start again, which they have done with such phenomenal results.)

Horse-racing would cease to be a private affair backed by public money; race courses would be municipalised or nationalised; horses would be owned by people's organisations; and obviously betting would be taken into some form of public control.

The newspapers would be much more responsible and realistic. At the moment, the papers give the impression that there is only one type of sport —commercialised. In much the same way as they talk of the "world" monetary crisis, ignoring the quarter to a third of mankind who live in socialist countries and have no crisis, so they are currently saying that football is in a mess. "Soccer is about to embark on possibly the most crucial financial season in its history," said John Morgan in the *Daily Express* on July 22. In fact, more people are playing organised club football than ever before. *Commercialised* football is in a mess, but the papers just say "football" or "soccer."

One possible reason for the inordinate amount of space given to sport is that the back pages serve an important need by confirming that there is a continuity in the affairs and events of the world. Each completed round of League matches, each Wimbledon tournament, each Big Race, reassures readers that there are areas of comfortable stability in life. Commercialised sport feeds off a populace perpetually on the edge of not being able to make ends meet and far from any decision-making processes.

Levenson concludes:

> "A socialist society will want to keep the fun in sport and will obviously not act by government edict. There will have to be a lot of discussion in the sports world first. The path towards this process will have already been prepared by the nation's decision to opt for socialism, radical changes in the outlooks of millions of people from which the sports world will hardly be exempt."

The "rows of chocolate soldiers" will have broken ranks, disarmed their masters and set up their own mass circulation newspapers. These newspapers will be able to say, truthfully: "Gladiators belong to the past, along with the exploitation that the most famous gladiator of all fought against all those years ago."

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Discussion Contribution on:

A Marxist View of Primary Medical Care

Hugh Faulkner

(*The author works as a GP in a Health Centre and is Medical Secretary of MPU/ASTMS*)

As usual Julian Tudor Hart has provided a stimulating and thought provoking paper on primary medical care. While this term is today more informative than 'general practice'—with its suggestion that we are simply dealing with the private province of the general practitioner—we should now be attempting a Marxist view of primary *health* care—not only medical. (See J. Tudor Hart's article in *Marxism Today*, November, 1975.)

Even Primary *Medical* care cannot be limited to "general practice and former local authority services such as home nursing, health visiting infant and maternity clinics". These are certainly some of the existing medical institutions dealing with 'first contacts'. But what about the ambulance, pharmacy, optician, and chiropody services? The school, university, factory health services and health and safety committees? Surely these are 'first contact' services? Hospitals are not only involved in secondary and tertiary care. They provide first contact services in accident and emergency departments, VD clinics, chest clinics, mass X-ray units and sometimes smoking and slimming clinics.

Health and the People

I cannot remember who it was who said that health was too important to be left to doctors—or even nurses. If we continue to examine the health services in terms of existing professional groupings and institutions we tend to go along with obsolescent concepts deeply embedded in the medical establishment—and of course in ourselves as products of its pretty efficient brainwashing machinery.

In his recent book Professor Berlinguer[1] quotes the Italian constitution of 1947 (at a time when Italy was emerging from nearly twenty-five years of fascism) as guaranteeing "the right to health as a fundamental right of the individual and the concern of society as a whole". This can only be achieved by the development of a general 'coscienza sanitaria' (health consciousness). And the main responsibility for developing this lies with the trade union and political forces.

Presumably the Chilean doctors who fiercely opposed the moderate health reforms of Dr. Allende's government loyally subscribed to the World Medical Association's affirmation that the health of the people is the first duty of every doctor! Certainly the trade unions in Britain have not yet succeeded in developing a 'coscienza sanitaria' amongst their own membership—despite the ritual passing each year of progressive motions on health at the TUC. But the questions Julian raises at the end of his paper depend mainly upon the development of a new and more profound concern for health in the Labour and trade union movements. This will not be easy to achieve. Without it many of his concepts will continue to be confined to gatherings of left-wing health workers and the more progressive departments of medical sociology.

Of course very real advances have been made by the NHS. The fact that every citizen has a right to the services of a GP free at the time of need is an important advance in primary health care. Capitation as a method of paying GPs—with all its limitations and anomalies—is a great improvement on the fee for item of service elsewhere in Europe. However it is extremely difficult to show that changes in the delivery of primary health care have improved the general health of the population. Perhaps as Bradford Hill believed: "positive health is as impossible to measure as love, beauty and happiness".[2] Such mortality and morbidity figures as are available—as Professor Doll points out in his lecture quoted above—do not show any significant improvement in Britain's health since 1948 compared with other countries.

Health Centres

Those who believed that we would reach the millenium merely by persuading a group of doctors

[1] Berlinguer, Giovanni—*Medicina e Politica*, De Donato, Bari, 1975.

[2] Doll, Richard—*To Measure NHS Progress*, Somerville Hastings Memorial Lecture, Fabian Society, 1974.

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to move to a health centre have of course been disappointed. Certainly the maintenance of the entrepreneurial role of the GP and BMA insistence on the sacred cow of his independent contractor status has made any planning of GP services difficult. If Bevan had carried out the plan contained in the 1944 White Paper to base primary health care on a network of health centres, he would have had little difficulty in staffing them from doctors home from the wars, who had voted overwhelmingly in favour of a salaried service a short time before.

In the event successive grateful governments retreated in the face of the BMA's fight for the freedom of GPs to stay in their own houses and lock-up shops—a vastly cheaper proposition for the Exchequer. And it took nearly 20 years before a significant number found their way into health centres. Obviously a centre which is merely a more or less elaborate way of housing five or six doctors with some ancillary staff will have limited effect on the provision of health care. Nevertheless the health centre concept presents the opportunity to build a new approach to primary health care far more readily than a service based on single-handed GPs. It offers the opportunity—but it does not guarantee it.

A Service for the People

If the vastly costly and cumbersome reorganisation achieves anything good at all it should be in the field of planning our available resources to their best advantage. We still know remarkably little about demands and needs at the PHC level. The comfortable assumption of the GP establishment that free choice of doctor means that all those who have not changed doctors are completely satisfied is unlikely to be correct. Especially in the many parts of Britain where there *is* only one GP for miles. For all their lack of teeth the Community Health Councils can play an important role in determining public concepts of demand and gaps in the PHC services, and some of the more active CHCs have already begun such projects.

Towards a Policy for Primary Health Care

But we do not need to wait for market research. If all doctors—and not just red eccentric ones—really believe that their first concern is the health of the people they must be concerned with all the factors we already know: bad housing, atmospheric pollution, noise, poor diet, lack of amenities, heavy or boring work in bad conditions, poverty—it requires no market research to show that these cause stress, illness and misery. Nor that unemployment and cuts in the health and welfare services add to them. Nor that many of the deaths and injuries at work, on the roads or at home could be prevented. We already know that our self-inflicted diseases caused by smoking, drinking and eating too much could be drastically reduced. A fraction of the money capitalism spends encouraging them could provide impressive health education campaigns.

Who can doubt that a trade union movement really immersed in the fight for a new concept of health would get results? Many trade-unionists are becoming involved in the problems of health and safety at work for the first time, and are learning that improvement in the quality of life in the work scene will only come by consistent trade union organisation and vigilance. Is it such a long step to TU involvement in the problems of the health of the whole community at home?

We know already that most people's basic demands for primary health care are relatively straightforward: an efficient accident and emergency service, readily accessible first-class hospital backing-up services; early and accurate diagnosis of pathology needing treatment; integrated medico-social care of long term illness, disability and handicap; rehabilitation and, where necessary, resettlement after serious accident or illness; easy access to the medico-social services for the vulnerable groups—the very old, the very young and their mothers, those with emotional or mental illness. For much of this supportive care our nursing and social work colleagues are more important than doctors. "Doctors are trained in their medical schools to provide services most patients don't require—and are not trained very well to cope with problems most people do have".[3] GPs like Julian have shown that there is a very important job to be done by primary physicians, but they will have to accept a lot of other people into the act if they are going to do it.

Specialisation in primary health care is now accepted even by the medical establishment and within a few years it will be impossible for any doctor to become a GP without preliminary training in primary health care. Of course the nature and content of this training will need a great deal of thought and probably many a battle.

Team Approach

It is increasingly difficult for a single-handed GP without help or regular contact with other health and social workers to give a really good service to his patients.

But those GPs who see 'the team' as a bevy of beautiful maidens waiting to become their devoted slaves are in for a nasty shock. Health visitors, practice and home nurses, secretaries and receptionists are beginning to organise themselves in trade unions and no longer see themselves as

[3] Jonas, Stephen—*Medical World*—Aug./Sept., 1975.

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Published by the Communist Party, 16 King Street, London, WC2E 8HY, and printed by Farleigh Press Ltd. (T.U.), Watford, Herts.—26266

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